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ABSTRACT

This second report in a study of child migrant education in Australia focuses on the interactions and interrelationships of students, teachers, and parents and attempts to identify each group's perceptions of the functions of schooling and the educational practices through which those functions may be fulfilled. Views on teachers and schooling were solicited from 3,043 high school students from 16 schools (11% of all Grade 9 students attending state schools in Sydney in 1974). Students who stayed at school over a three-year period and as many as possible of the 1,715 students who left school were followed. In 1975, 690 parents of students in the study were interviewed; in 1976, 637 teachers were surveyed via a questionnaire. The theoretical orientations and research methodology of the study are presented in chapter 2. Research findings on students', teachers', and parents' perceptions are given in chapters 3-6. The report highlights the degree to which there is an absence of a shared understanding of the functions of schooling and argues for the importance of shared agreement on curriculum content and schooling procedures in the interest of the education system. Appendices include tables, a methodology of open-ended analysis, and extracts of the interview schedule and guide. (CG)

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The Educational Experience of Sydney High School Students

Report No.2

Phil Meade

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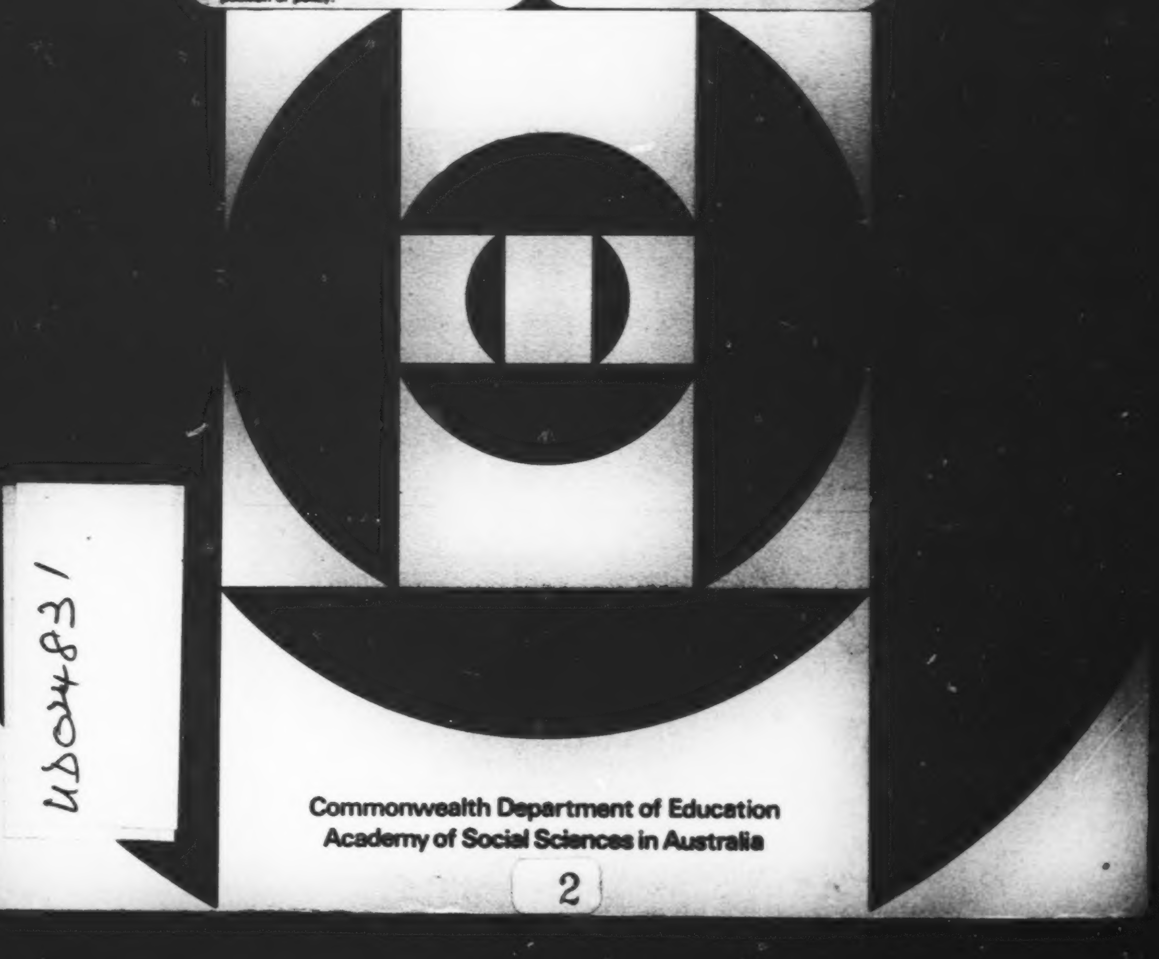

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Commonwealth Department of Education
Academy of Social Sciences in Australia

2

COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN AUSTRALIA

THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE
OF SYDNEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

STUDENTS', TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLING

PHIL MEADE
(Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education)

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PREFACE

This is the second report available in the survey of Sydney High School students. The survey was under the joint responsibility of the late Dr Jean Martin and the author. The death of Jean Martin leaves a void in Australian sociology which will not be filled. The knowledge, influence, ideas, criticisms and unstinting support that she gave throughout the project were sadly missed by the author in the preparation of this report.

We have conducted the longitudinal investigation into the educational experience of 3043 high school students since 1974. The Commonwealth funded the project initially through the Department of Immigration, then through the Department of Education; the Academy of the Social Sciences of Australia agreed to act as sponsor as part of its long-standing commitment to migration studies. Subsequently the Australian National University and the School of Education at the University of New South Wales provided financial and research staff support. The final preparation of this report was funded by the National Inquiry into Teacher Education and support services were provided by the Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education.

Numerous interviewers, research workers, computer personnel and typists at the University of New South Wales, The Australian National University and Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education have assisted in the project and their efforts are very much appreciated.

Sincerely appreciated were the suggestions, constructive criticisms and support that I received from friends and colleagues as I wrote and rewrote the report.

Finally, I wish to thank the students, their parents, teachers and principals in Sydney State Secondary Schools who co-operated in the field investigation.

Phil Meade

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

In the early 1970s concern was being expressed about possible inequalities of educational opportunity in Australia. Of particular concern was the disadvantaged position of migrants of non-English-speaking (NES) backgrounds.

The Commonwealth responded to the need for research into the social aspects of child migrant education by funding a research program, initially through the Department of Immigration, then through the Department of Education. The Academy of Social Sciences agreed to act as sponsor as part of its long-standing commitment to migration studies. Subsequently, the Australian National University, Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education and the University of New South Wales also provided financial support.

This particular survey (carried out between 1974 - 77) was the outcome of recommendations on the need for research on child migrant education made by the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council (CIAC) in 1972, and our report is the first to include longitudinal data on the progress of migrant high school children. Further details of the background to the research are given in Martin and Meade (1979a).

The first report gave an overview of the main findings. This present report, which is the second to be released, received special funding from the National Inquiry into Teacher Education. It focuses on the interactions and interrelationships of students, teachers and parents as these relate to the educational experience. The third report which will be available in 1981, provides a comparison of the education experiences of migrant students of non-English-speaking origin and students whose parents were born in an English-speaking country.

STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Our longitudinal investigation attempts to unravel the complexities of the education experience and provides insights into adolescent behaviour. In our data collection we emphasised those aspects which are unlikely to be affected by social changes, i.e. we concentrated on enduring aspects of human behaviour.

In the past decade a great deal has been written about what the school should and should not do. Numerous initiatives have been undertaken by governments to try to improve various aspects of schooling. More often than not these initiatives have resulted in major reports by Committees (e.g. the Schools Commission Report, the Williams Report, the Galbally Report and more recently the Auchmuty report). A number of innovations following from these reports have been thrust upon the schools. But in spite of the best intentions of educational reformers, insufficient attention has been paid (either when identifying problem areas or implementing solutions) to the views of three important groups associated with the schooling experience - students, teachers and parents.

In this study we surveyed the views of 3043 Sydney high school students on teachers and schooling. These students come from 16 schools and represent 11 per cent of all Grade 9 students attending state schools in Sydney in 1974. We obtained information from those who stayed at school over a three-year period, and we also followed up as many as we could trace of the 1715 students who left school before the end of Grade 11. In 1975, we interviewed 690 parents of students in the study, and in 1976 we obtained information from 637 teachers via a questionnaire.

We hope that our results will provide insights into each participant group's perceptions of the functions and processes of schooling.

We were delighted to find that many students were able to discuss their schooling experiences perceptively. Some lavished praise on teachers and schooling in general, some were harshly critical, but most drew attention to both positive and negative experiences. Students in our inquiry also provided many helpful suggestions for improvement.

Our interview program with 690 parents turned out to be a fairly complex undertaking. When one or both parents could not take part in the interview because of a lack of knowledge of English, a foreign language interviewer was engaged and the results translated into English. This occurred in 163 instances. We asked parents about their perceptions of schooling and inquired if they wished to be involved in secondary education. The results are most definitive and should assist secondary educators who wish to identify barriers which may frustrate their attempts to strengthen links with their communities.

Our survey concentrates mainly on the perceptions of schooling held by students and parents. We limited our survey of teachers' perceptions to those aspects which we could elicit from a brief questionnaire. However, we found, in many instances, that teachers' perceptions of problems mirrored those of students and parents. Teachers also proved to be particularly perceptive of students' problems.

We hope that our report will stimulate debate among students, parents and teachers about the roles which each can play in education.

In Chapter 2 we look at theoretical issues that underpin our investigation. Readers who wish to focus mainly on the research findings may prefer to skip directly to Chapter 3.

To sum up, an important objective of this work is to stimulate a rethinking of fundamental assumptions about the role of education in society and the part played by participants. We believe that an important first step in any such reappraisal is to make a close examination of the views of schooling that are held by students, teachers and parents.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the interactions and interrelationships of students, teachers and parents in connection with the education experience. We are particularly concerned in this investigation to identify each participant group's perception of the function of the school, and the educational practices through which this function can best be fulfilled. The approach rests on the assumption that these perceptions of school are indicative of the participants' 'lived reality'.

Berger and Luckman (1967) show in their *The Social Construction of Reality* that 'reality' is essentially a mentally manufactured system of pragmatic constructs about the 'real' world. It has both an individual and a social dimension. In effect, members of each participant group 'construct the reality' of school through an interactive process involving *individual constructs* (i.e. processes associated with abstractions of phenomena deriving from the individual mind) and *social constructs* (i.e. according to the particular group's 'reality orientedness', which develops through acculturation into a particular society and into *its* reality). Each participant group's perception of the 'reality' of the school, then, is an integration of particular individual and social constructs of the school, and these integrations may not be consonant with one another.

The original theoretical orientations of the study were outlined in Martin and Meade (1979a). These are reproduced in this chapter to provide a background to two further theoretical frameworks developed to assist our interpretations of the complex issues associated with any investigations of the perceptions of schooling by students, teachers and parents.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS (Martin and Meade, 1979a: 3-6)

> Our original theoretical approach reflects two influences: the dominant theme of equality in the sociology of education literature in the early 70s and the mounting criticism in Australia of the disadvantaged position of migrants of non-English-speaking background...

In the course of the study, however, we came to embed this orientation within two other theoretical traditions. One lies in the broad field of sociology of knowledge and identifies the education system as, above all, a reality-defining and confirming institution: the 'institutional ideology'. The field to which the other belongs is less coherent and obvious: it concerns mobility from one socio-cultural milieu to another, specifically migration as either a stunting or liberating experience: the 'migration experience'. Our conception of these two traditions is outlined below.

The Institutional Ideology

The first sees what goes on in schools as structured in terms of the participants' 'knowledge' (their definitions of reality) of the functions of schooling and the educational practices through which these functions can best be fulfilled. This includes assessment of how well existing practices are working, solutions to problems and explanations of why things go wrong. Although this knowledge is not all-of-a-piece, but marked by contradictions, ambiguities and gaps, certain definitions of reality dominate the education system. We call these the institutional ideology. This ideology derives from and sustains the school's articulation of two systems of accreditation: on the one hand, the accreditation of teachers, educational administrators etc., for employment; and, on the other, the accreditation of children in the post-school educational and occupational structures. The career structure of teachers is predicated on the application of 'universal' definitions of teachers' qualifications, commitment and effectiveness. The structures that allocate young people selectively to tertiary education and jobs are predicated on the application of 'universal' definitions of student competence.

For the purpose of this discussion, we want to focus on particular aspects of the institutional ideology (others we shall ignore altogether). The basic one is ability or, in common parlance, brightness. We do not need to rehearse the well-known and devastating criticisms of institutionalised measures of brightness that are treated as objective, culture-free and value-free, but we can summarise our working understanding of the processes by which schools define brightness by saying three things. First, convential measures of brightness span an extremely limited range of cognitive abilities and exclude cognitive and non-cognitive capacities that are highly valued in diverse contexts in the larger society. Second, teachers operate with concepts of 'normal' performance, that is, norms appropriate to particular categories or streams of students. (Nell Keddie quotes a teacher who described a group of hardworking pupils in stream C by saying 'They're as good as Bs' in Young, 1971:139.) And third, these concepts make a major contribution to the differentiated school environment and opportunities experienced by different children.

The high school thus fulfils varying functions for children according to how bright it defines them to be. It should give bright children every educational opportunity, encourage them to have confidence in their own ability and motivate them to aspire high and work hard so that they leave school accredited to enter tertiary institutions and ultimately high status occupations. The institutional ideology is not so concerned with less bright children; it gives the high school simply the residual function of trying to ensure that these children reach a minimum level of competence in literacy and numeracy, that they are steered away from unrealistic goals and motivated to enough self-discipline and industry to free the school to concentrate on their more favoured peers.

To the extent that teachers, other school staff and bureaucrats, parents and students share, or at least agree to operate on this common ideology, the school careers of students will be highly predictable and consistent. But where this congruence does not exist, the connection between brightness, educational opportunity, aspirations/motivation and accreditation will break down. Lack of congruence may manifest itself in diverse ways. Three major sources of ideas that run counter to the institutional ideology are the definitions of reality embodied in sex role differentiation, in class differentiation and in ethnic differentiation. Each of these perspectives provides a base from which to challenge or reject the nexus that the ideology asserts between performance, opportunity, motivation/aspirations and accreditation. Sex role perspectives accept the bright child career as more appropriate for boys than girls. Class perspectives introduce the idea, among those in higher class positions, that accreditation should not depend on brightness. The influence of this view in high schools is attenuated however, by the fact that families who subscribe to it tend to send their children to independent schools. Among those in lower class positions there is scepticism that the school acknowledges the brightness of the lower class child or seriously tries to transform that brightness into accreditation. Ethnic differentiation produces a number of perspectives that deny the association between performance and aspirations and that also insist on defining the school as, above all, a socialising rather than an accrediting agency - the job of the school is to turn migrant children into Australians (see Martin and Meade, 1979b).

The dominance of the institutional ideology is undermined not only by the influence of these 'external' perspectives but also by the incongruence between the school's two accrediting functions. The operation of the authority structure, on which teacher accreditation depends, creates such tensions and alienation that the function of accrediting students can be carried out only very imperfectly... That is to say, preserving order in the classroom and stability

> in the school often takes precedence over the job of transforming brightness into aspirations/motivation, performance and accreditation. Some bright students leave school to free themselves from the school's control, while less bright students sometimes stay on, challenge the teachers' authority, and influence classroom practice by refusing to act in terms of teachers' definitions of who they are, what they want, and why (see Moscovici, 1976: Sharp and Green, 1975). Nevertheless, the influence of students in bringing about changes that they wish to see - as distinct from winning sporadic concessions or eliciting ad hoc repression on the part of teachers - is weak. Their motivation to try to change the authority structure and classroom practice is also weak because school involves them only temporarily and they look to the jobs and tertiary institutions they will move into once they leave school for the fulfilment of their true identities and interests. To define childhood and adolescence as preparation for the future - as the institutional ideology implies - aligns both with the function of schools in accrediting students and with the enervating and compromising effect of young people's orientation away from the school to what they see as the real world beyond.

The two further theoretical frameworks we have developed (i.e. in addition to the institutional ideology and the migration experience) are complex extensions of the institutional ideology, and we turn to a discussion of these before describing our conceptions of the migration experience.

As we have indicated, the knowledge that sustains the institutional ideology is not all-of-a-piece, but marked by contradictions, ambiguities and gaps. We have also indicated that the careers of students will be highly predictable and consistent if students, teachers and parents share, or at least agree to operate on, this common ideology.

There are many teachers who do not support this ideology but, like students, they do not exert a strong enough influence to bring about changes. However, their motivation to change the authority structure is likely to be much stronger than that of students. High unemployment rates that have drastically reduced teacher resignation rates influence this process in two opposing ways:

(a) teaching is likely to be a lifetime occupation for many, and efforts to improve the system will 'pay-off' in the long term;

(b) with few alternative occupations available, teachers are less likely to 'rock the boat' and more likely to defer to superior authority.

It makes a lot of difference whether students, teachers and parents who share, or at least agree to operate on, this common ideology do so as the result of an understanding of the process or do so as the result of complete ignorance of the processes which operate in reality. The latter group, which may include many migrant parents, may go along with what they perceive is the reality of schooling. Their perceptions, based on ignorance of what actually happens at school, may be quite erroneous and even confused with their own aspirations for what they hope schools will do.

THE FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOLING

The present investigation attempts, in particular, to identify the perceptions of the functions of schooling that are held by students, teachers and parents. What is said about the functions of schooling in the literature is most ambiguous. Our discussion so far has focused mainly on the institutional ideology, which suggests that many who participate in schooling place central importance on the accreditation function of schooling. But other aspects of schooling also contribute to our image of the school. The process of schooling is very complex indeed when we consider the wide range of influences and practices which operates. In this section we attempt to unravel some of these complexities by developing two tentative frameworks in order to compare and contrast the conflicting theoretical perspectives which underlie discussions about the functions of schooling.

Perceptions of schooling held by students, teachers and parents in our field investigation will be analysed in the context of these two frameworks. The first relates to the education experience of students and the second focuses on interactions among students, teachers and parents in the context of an overall education system.

A Framework to Describe Contrasting Perceptions of the Education Experience

A series of contrasting proposition sets concerning the education experience of students are summarised in Diagram 1. The contrasting propositions represent the extremes of a continuum and we further postulate that the 'real' school lies somewhere between these two extremes in each case. The propositions were developed from a survey of the literature (Meade, 1978) set in the context of a loose structure based on the assumptions that the school is concerned with:

(a) student self-development;

(b) preparing students as members of society, to achieve mutually rewarding involvements with others;

(c) providing students with equality of educational opportunity; and,

(d) maintaining society and providing students with those capabilities and competencies necessary to improve society.

These assumptions act as underlying themes in the development of the proposition sets. The propositions are not intended to be mutually exclusive and some overlap of content occurs.

1A School Enables Students to Gain Knowledge and Develop Attitudes and Skills Necessary for Continued Self-education

(a) School enables students to gain knowledge via appropriate, enjoyable and stimulating socialising experiences.

(b) Students are stimulated via the teaching processes employed in school and through satisfying relationships with teachers to become self-motivated learners and achieve self-realisation.

(c) They obtain cognitive and non-cognitive skills and attitudes necessary for economic independence and for occupational opportunities.

(d) They leave school equipped and motivated to engage in self-education activities and, in particular, to engage in those self-education activities which are necessary for those seeking to keep abreast of new information and developments.

1B School Enables Students to Gain Knowledge but the Processes Employed Lead to Student Alienation from the School and Learning

(a) School enables students to gain knowledge, but the processes

DIAGRAM 1

A FRAMEWORK TO DESCRIBE CONTRASTING PERCEPTIONS OF THE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

1A School enables students to gain knowledge and develop attitudes and skills necessary for continued self-education.

1B School enables students to gain knowledge but the processes employed lead to student alienation from the school.

2A School is preparation for life.

2B School programs are directed towards the teaching and learning of academic subjects remote from practical real-life applications.

3A School enables students to gain realistic perceptions of the world of work including their own occupational potential.

3B School does not assist students to gain realistic perceptions of the world of work nor does it assist them to develop an understanding of their own occupational potential.

4A School teaches students to work cooperatively.

4B School does not teach students to work cooperatively.

5A School facilitates the development of young people into mature, responsible, autonomous adults.

5B School retards the development of young people into mature, responsible, autonomous adults.

6A School fosters equality of educational opportunity.

6B School perpetuates and legitimizes inequality of educational opportunity.

7A School preperes students to live in a multicultural society.

7B School does not equip students to live in a multicultural society.

8A School maintains society and develops students' critical faculties.

8B School maintains society but does not develop students' critical faculties.

employed, e.g. enforcement of inflexible rules and regulations and the use of methods of external motivation including the use of corporal punishment, lead students to resent the schooling experience.

(b) Students do not enjoy satisfying relationships with teachers.

(c) They do not achieve self-realisation via the schooling process and become alienated from both the school and learning.

(d) As a result of unenjoyable schooling experiences, students are not motivated to engage in self-education activities when they leave school.

2A School Is Preparation for Life

(a) School curricula are designed to provide students with an appropriate balance of academic and social development experiences to enable them to participate successfully in the various facets of society. Thus all students develop to an appropriate level those competencies and capabilities that are needed by a member of society who participates in the various social roles. These include, for example, the ability to appreciate the cultural riches of civilisation, and the ability to be a discerning consumer of goods.

(b) School subjects are not taught in isolation from each other. Teachers assist students to integrate the knowledge they gain at school both in terms of 'theory v theory' (for example, efforts are made by teachers of such subjects as social studies and Indonesian to utilise teaching methods which enable students to integrate the knowledge they gain from the subjects) and 'theory v practice' dimensions.

(c) Teachers co-operate to diagnose and remedy any difficulties that students experience across the curricula.

(d) Emphasis is placed on the application of studies to the solution of real-life problems.

2B School Programs Are Directed Towards the Teaching and Learning of Academic Subjects Remote from Practical Real-life Applications

(a) School programs are geared to a narrow range of academic subjects focusing on content which can be studied in isolation from the real applications in society and which can be reproduced via pencil and paper tests. Students find that cognitive skills necessary for economic independence and for occupational opportunities are emphasised to the detriment of equally important non-cognitive skills and attitudes, which are given scant attention. When non-academic studies are included in school programs, they hold low status and are not considered to be part of the 'real' mainstream life of what school is all about. For example, little priority is given to human development studies.

(b) School programs focus on isolated segments of compartmentalised, academically oriented knowledge. Subjects tend to be taught in isolation from each other. Little emphasis is placed on assisting students to integrate knowledge studied in these subject areas.

(c) Teachers tend to become para-professional subject specialists who do not participate in teaching outside their defined specialist subject area. Although a specialist subject teacher (say mathematics) may frequently be in a position to diagnose student weaknesses and provide remedial help in another subject area (say English), little priority is given to such activities. As para-professionals, it is possible that teachers do not wish to encroach on the specialist subject domain of a colleague. Perhaps, they do not feel competent to assist because of the narrow subject emphasis which they themselves experienced in their own tertiary studies and teacher training.

(d) Little emphasis is placed on the practical solving of real-life problems. Attempts by students to solve practical, real-life problems without first mastering the theoretical academic background to the problems are not encouraged by school personnel and are not considered to be legitimate activities for students to engage in.

3A School Enables Students to Gain Realistic Perceptions of the World of Work Including Their Own Occupational Potential

(a) Opportunities are provided for students to experience the workplace and to interact with workers from a wide range of occupations.

(b) Students are provided with career information, including information about the general lifestyles and conditions of workers. Emphasis is given to providing relevant information for students who leave school at different stages in response to their different needs.

(c) Students are counselled with respect to educational paths and courses needed to achieve occupational goals.

(d) Students are counselled to assist them to examine their own self-development in relation to occupations, and opportunities are provided for reality-testing experiences.

(e) Students are given training and practical experience in negotiating occupational selection hurdles, including methods and procedures of applying for a job.

(f) Teachers have realistic perceptions of the world of work gained via ongoing interactions with employers and workers in the workforce.

3B School Does Not Assist Students to Gain Realistic Perceptions of the World of Work nor Does It Assist Them to Develop an Understanding of Their Own Occupational Potential.

(a) Students are excluded from contact with workers and the work place and from the mainstream activities in the institutions of society.

(b) Students are provided with insufficient information on careers. An over-emphasis is placed on preparing students for tertiary education entrance and the professions, and insufficient attention is given to preparing students to leave school at different stages and with respect to their different needs.

(c) Students are not counselled with respect to the educational paths and courses they will need to undertake to achieve desired occupational goals.

(d) Students are not assisted to examine occupations in relation to their own self-development, and opportunities are not provided for reality-testing of occupational aspirations.

(e) Students are not provided with training in job application procedures.

(f) Teachers do not have realistic perceptions of the world of work and are isolated from employers and workers in the workplace.

4A School Teaches Students to Work Co-operatively

Students are taught the theory and practice of working cooperatively with others to solve problems. In their schoolwork they are encouraged to share resources and ideas with peers.

4B School Does Not Teach Students to Work Cooperatively

School does not teach students to work co-operatively but rather places an over-emphasis on competitiveness. Students are not encouraged to share ideas and resources, nor are they encouraged to work co-operatively to solve problems. Emphasis is given in school programs to problems that can be solved by individual students working in isolation from others rather than by students working collectively and co-operatively. Accreditation rewards are given to students who succeed in these individual tasks and this process also encourages competition to the detriment of co-operation among students. It follows that in the final analysis school does not formally recognise students who achieve excellence in those skills that are needed to facilitate group problem solving.

5A School Facilitates the Development of Young People into Mature, Responsible, Autonomous Adults

School helps students become autonomous adults who can:

(a) manage their own affairs and develop decision-making skills;

(b) interact with others from a cross-section of age groups in the community, including the elderly;

(c) interact with others from a cross-section of social classes and ethnic groups in the community;

(d) take responsibility for the welfare of others;

(e) accept self-responsibility for their own academic work standards and personal behaviour;

(f) develop their self-concept and achieve self-esteem.

5B School Retards the Development of Young People into Mature, Responsible, Autonomous Adults

(a) Students are largely powerless in the school setting. They do not have much choice as to which subjects they study and they do not contribute to decisions regarding rules which govern the institution. They do not develop decision-making skills. They are kept in dependent status and are given little responsibility. Although childlike obedience is demanded from students, they are expected to display adult responsibility.

(b) Students spend most of their time at school with a narrow age range of peers. They are largely isolated from young children and adults, including the elderly.

(c) In most schools, only limited opportunities are provided for students to interact with a cross-section of social classes and ethnic groups in the community.

(d) Students do not gain experience in taking responsibility for the welfare of others.

(e) Students are not stimulated to accept self-responsibility for their own academic work standards and personal behaviour. Rather they are required to 'toe the line' in response to rules that they did not help to frame. In their academic work they are motivated by external inducements in the form of credentials.

(f) Insufficient opportunities are provided for students to develop their self-concepts and achieve self-esteem.

6A School Fosters Equality of Educational Opportunity

School promotes the ideal of equality of educational opportunity whereby students are assisted to achieve the best they are capable of. As students experience differing private family resources (material and human) some require more assistance than others from public resources (which includes assistance from school personnel) if they are to achieve the best they are capable of. Such redemptive activities are undertaken by educators with full awareness that, when taken to an extreme literal interpretation, the ideal of equality of educational opportunity is a false ideal as it is not practically possible for the school to compensate single-handedly for differing private resources among students. Four further objectives follow from the ideal of equality of educational opportunity.

(a) School fosters equal opportunity for students to gain credentials which are viewed as legitimate by society and which, in turn, influence life chances.

(b) A primary role of the school is to educate all children, and this aim takes precedence over the role of the school as a selection agency or gatekeeper placed on the pathway to life chances.

(c) Students, whatever their level of ability or cultural background, have a right to the opportunity to achieve their best in the areas of education for which they are best fitted. Thus each student is provided with an education (both in content and process) which is best suited to his or her needs and which enables the student to best demonstrate the competencies that he or she has achieved.

(d) School provides students with counselling and guidance to assist them to maintain an appropriate balance between the potentially conflicting objectives (a) and (c). For example, if an over-emphasis is placed on the objective outlined in (c) students may achieve excellence in skills which are not valued in the wider society context. However, the final decision regarding what is a desirable balance among the objectives outlined rests in each case with the individual student and his or her parents. Some students may elect to emphasise goals other than 'improved life chances'. What is considered essential, however, is that each student is provided by the school with sufficient information so that he or she is aware of the likely short-term and long-term ramifications of any decision, e.g. whether to leave or remain in secondary schooling. (Objective (d) is clearly made difficult to realise if members of society define legitimate education strictly in the narrowly academic sense.)

6B School Perpetuates and Legitimates Inequality of Educational Opportunity

School contributes to inequality of educational opportunity via the following policies and processes:

(a) Narrow academic goals are espoused by the school and these goals are utilised to justify the provision of differentiated experiences for students from differing backgrounds:

(i) School curricula and the culture of the school (in particular, the form of language which is considered to be legitimate) is more in tune with the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of children from middle to upper socio-economic status families of English origin.

(ii) Homogeneous ability-grouping of students, coupled with associated teacher expectations, defuses the aspirations and self-images of the lowly ranked groups of students.

(iii) The selection procedures employed quantify and bring into conscious focus in the minds of teachers, students and parents the reality of each student's success or otherwise in coping with the school experience. The quantification procedure provides an indication of each student's 'merit rating' and helps to legitimate the selection procedures employed. The over-emphasis placed on selection and accreditation procedures means that some students are encouraged to 'strive even harder' while others are 'cooled out'. Those rejected are disenchanted, embarrassed and humiliated after acknowledging their failure to 'make the grade' in school - the first major life challenge they have had to face outside the family group.

(b) Insufficient counselling and career advice is provided to enable students to make informed decisions about their own schooling e.g. what school subjects to choose in order to achieve desired occupational aspirations and whether to leave or remain in secondary schooling. Under these circumstances, students who do not receive appropriate counselling and guidance from parents are likely to make decisions regarding their own future education without being aware of the ramifications of such decisions. For example, a student who is disenchanted with school may leave without being aware of the significance of school credentials for job selection and job conditions, including such aspects as satisfaction, security of tenure and long-term prospects.

7A School Prepares Students to Live in a Multicultural Society

School helps students to cope with the reality of living in a multicultural society, secure in their own personal and cultural identities and tolerant of those of others.

7B School Does Not Equip Students to Live in a Multicultural Society

School curricula reflect the narrow monocultural goals associated with a white, middle class Australian society. The school operates as a ruthless assimilationist agency which can cause some students to reject their ethnic identity and arouse feelings of alienation between children and parents. Ethnocentrism is encouraged.

8A School Maintains Society and Develops Students' Critical Faculties

The maintenance of society is seen as an important function of the school but at the same time the school alerts students to the inherent dangers associated with the unquestioned acceptance of 'the way things are'. Rather, students are encouraged to examine the assumptions underlying accepted practices and to critically evaluate those practices so that, rather than becoming 'prisoners of their own history', they develop competencies which are essential if they are to maintain and improve their social and cultural world. School therefore encourages creativity among students and stimulates them to examine unconventional ways of thinking and problem solving.

8B School Maintains Society but Does Not Develop Students' Critical Faculties

The maintenance of society is seen as a paramount function of the school. Teachers and students uncritically accept 'the way things are' and mindlessly adopt prescribed curriculum content and texts. Students are taught 'acceptable' ways to solve problems and also what are 'acceptable' problems to solve. Students are not encouraged to be creative thinkers and problem solvers.

A Framework to Describe Contrasting Perceptions of Interactions among Students, Teachers and Parents.

Our next framework consists of two tentative models of education systems which attempt to portray extreme positions in relation to perceptions of what are considered 'desirable' guidelines for patterns of interactions among students, teachers and parents (see Diagram 2). (Parents are used in the model to represent parents and citizens, i.e. members of the community.) As with the framework just described, it is postulated that the 'real' education system lies somewhere between these two extremes.

Several propositions are postulated with reference to the two models A and B:

9A Teachers are accountable to the Education Department (Model A) but have the freedom to exercise professional autonomy in their work, i.e. freedom with responsibility.

9B Teachers defer to the Department on all matters of educational policy (Model B), they bow to formal bureaucratic rules and do not have freedom to exercise professional autonomy. As a result, many teachers seldom think about educational objectives as they feel powerless to bring about change.

10A Teachers are free to comment publicly on educational policies and procedures. Such discussions are likely to contribute to an increased awareness of educational issues among students, parents and members of the community with a result that democracy in education is enhanced.

10B Teachers are gagged in regard to public discussion on educational policy and procedures. Parents, students and the public are ill-informed about educational issues with a result that the democratic process in education is threatened.

11A Students, teachers and parents are partners in the schooling process. As partners, they possess a 'shared understanding' of the functions of schooling and schools are likely to be responsive to local community needs.

11B Students and parents defer to the definition of the schooling process espoused by the Education Department and implemented by teachers. There exists a lack of 'shared understanding' of the functions of schooling among those participating. The 'concept of the four-walled' school operates whereby schools are insensitive to local community needs.

12A Authentic interaction occurs among students, teachers and parents whereby the interests and identities of each are valued and respected. Together they contribute to provide an educational experience which enhances each participant's identity and contributes to a tolerance of others' identities.

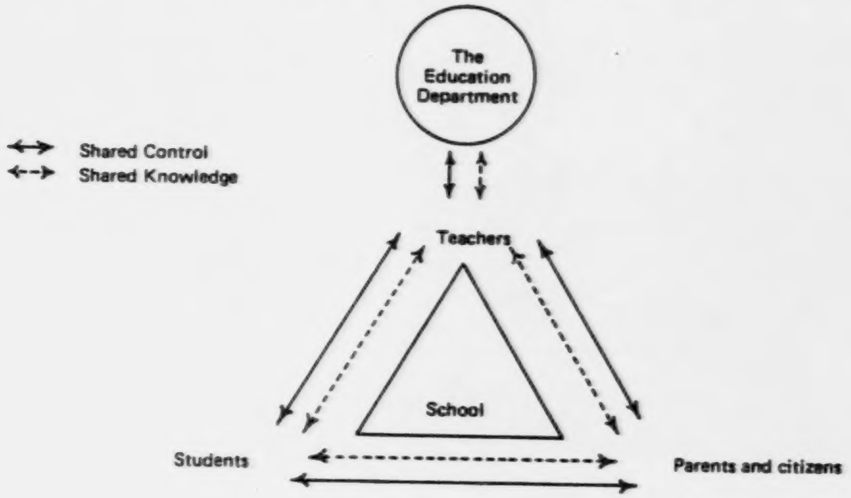
12B When students, teachers and parents examine the reality of the school experience, each group finds that their interests and identities are defined by others (often out of existence) and their conceptions of their own experience devalued or ignored.

DIAGRAM 2

TWO TENTATIVE MODELS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

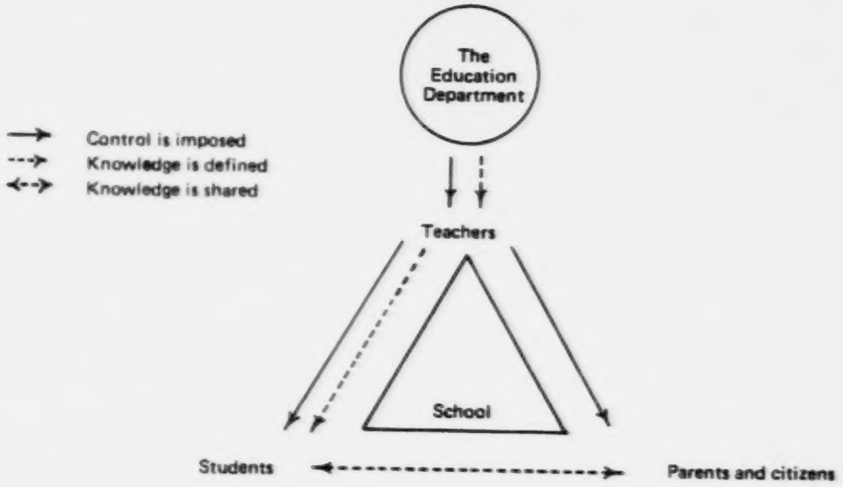
MODEL A

An Ideal (Utopian) Education System


The Education Department
↔ Shared Control
⇠⇢ Shared Knowledge
Teachers
School
Students
Parents and citizens

MODEL B

An Intrepretation of the 'Real' Education System


The Education Department
→ Control is imposed
⇢ Knowledge is defined
⇠⇢ Knowledge is shared
Teachers
School
Students
Parents and citizens

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> **The Migration Experience** (Martin and Meade, 1979a:6 - 7)
>
> The [final] theoretical tradition that has informed our work relates to the migration experience. Stunting and liberating theories of migration have often been presented as alternatives. So far as the individual is concerned, stunting theories emphasise those aspects of migrancy that are believed to produce insecurity, loss of a sense of identity and personal disorganisation; liberating theories direct attention to those aspects that release the individual from confining social and cultural bonds, and so free his creative and critical faculties, and to the maturity and insight to be gained by 'experienced participants in more than one culture' (Keddie ed., 1973:10). At the group level, stunting theories associate migrants with other subordinated minorities and concentrate on the defensive nature of migrant group organisation, group self-hatred and the tendency for migrant groups to become the scapegoats for the failures of the established community. Liberating theories, on the other hand, are concerned with the fresh vision brought to bear by migrants as 'strangers' (see Schutz, 1971), their role as innovators and catalysts for social change (see Moscovici, 1976) and even as prodders of slumbering conscience (see Martin, 1972; Richards, 1978).
>
> Stunting theories overlap with theories of cultural deprivation in the sense that the failure of children of lower socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds to thrive in school is attributed to the intellectual poverty of their homes and the limitations of their pre-school learning opportunities, as the result of which 'normal development' is inhibited and the child's 'maturational ceiling is lowered' (Keddie ed., 1973:11).
>
> The climate of opinion that led the CIAC to promote the need for research on migrant schooling was dominated by the view of migration as a stunting, or at least a problem-generating, experience. In a recent Melbourne investigation, Taft and Cahill refer to this view and the fact that their own research did not support it. So far as newly arrived children from South America were concerned:
>
>> It might have been expected that the continual stress of having to adjust to a new culture, new situations and new social acquaintances, combined with frustration and failures, would have produced much more unhappiness than was detected.
>>
>> Taft and Cahill (1978:107)

Martin and Meade (1979b) have identified at least thirteen different aspects of migrancy which may be theoretically salient. Each of these can be sub-grouped under the overall stunting and liberating perspectives. Six of these, which may assist our interpretation of results in the present investigation, are listed below.

13 Non-participation in dominant culture. Migrants are people who lack a shared understanding of the society that receives them.

14 Adherence to a minority culture. Migrants are people whose attitudes, values and way of life derive from the country they have left and are different from, and possibly incompatible with, those of the receiving society.

15 Non-participation in established groups. Migrants are people with incomplete, deficient or attenuated relations in the established community. The most common form of this state of deficiency is that their relations with the established population are limited to the economic sphere.

16 Outsider status. Migrants are people who are regarded and treated as inferior outsiders by the receiving society. They are the objects of prejudice, hostility and discrimination and their cultures are devalued.

17 Stranger status. The migrant is the outsider who, because he takes nothing for granted, displays fresh and penetrating insights into the established culture.

18 Isolation. Migrants are people who, by virtue of their mobility, have become isolated from community ties and hence from social support for their values, attitudes and way of life.

Migration as a stunting experience applies under 13, 14, 15, 16 and 18, while 17 reflects the notion that migration is a liberating experience.

THE SAMPLE AND THE DATA (Martin and Meade, 1979a: 8-11)

> The simplest way of showing how these theoretical orientations informed our research is to describe the sample and the data we collected. From 168 state high schools in the Sydney metropolitan area we selected a stratified cluster sample of schools (plus one pilot school). Stratification was based on school type (boys, girls, coeducational) and proportion of Grade 9 children whose mothers were born in a non-English-speaking country. All the selected schools agreed to co-operate and continued to participate for the three years we collected data directly from students. The 3043 students in the project consist of the body of students who were in Grade 9 in these 16 schools in 1974. They represent approximately 11 per cent of all Grade 9 students in state schools in Sydney

in that year. Students who remained at school provided data for each of the three years 1974-76. In 1977 the only additional data we obtained were Higher School Certificate results. Altogether 1715 students left school before the end of Grade 11. We followed up as many of these as we could trace (63 per cent) by mail questionnaires and telephone. A further 120 students transferred to other schools or repeated a year and 41 students left New South Wales and could not be traced. In 1975 we interviewed the parents of a sub-sample of approximately 690 of the students; the sub-sample was weighted towards parents of non-English-speaking origin, many of whom had to be interviewed in their own language. In 1976 we added a teachers' questionnaire and 637 teachers responded, but the value of the data collected from teachers is limited by the fact that in a few of the 16 schools a low proportion of teachers answered.

The survey instruments are summarised in Table 1. For the sake of brevity we shall restrict further comment to the material collected from the students in school. This material can be grouped into five categories appropriate to the theoretical interests outlined above: *personal and family background* (age, sex, place of birth and age of arrival in Australia if born overseas, family composition, parents' birthplaces and occupations); *educational performance* (ML & MQ tests of quantitative and linguistic ability and comprehension, Standard Progressive Matrices, GEFT) and *accreditation* (SC and HSC results); *motivation/aspirations/self-concept* (hopes for future education and jobs, SEI, essays on 'What will your life be like in ten years time?'); *school experience* (work, e.g., degree of interest in subjects taken, hours of home study; peers e.g., friendships, answers to the question 'What does it take to be a member of the leading crowd at your school?'; teachers, e.g. teacher influence on aspirations, answers to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school'; school, e.g. answers to the question, 'Would you please tell us what you think are the good things about school and what you think are some problems of school?' essays on 'How does school affect teenagers?'); *family and extra-school interests and social experience* (e.g. parents' influence on aspirations, leisure pursuits, contacts with friends, neighbours and kin, membership of clubs, hours spent watching TV). From Table 1 and these examples of the data collected it will be apparent that the range of material we have is very wide indeed - from standardised, highly-structured tests such as the Standard Progressive Matrices to open-ended questions, sentence completions and essays. On most of the matters we regard as of central importance - e.g. students' attitudes to teachers - we have several sources of data, obtained over two or three years. The student questionnaires contained a core body of questions mostly on aspirations, which was collected in each of the three years of the study.

TABLE 1

INSTRUMENTS RELATING TO THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS

Grade when measured			
Grade 9, 1974	Grade 10, 1975	Grade 11, 1976	Grade 12, 1977
Student questionnaire	Student questionnaire	Student questionnaire	Higher School Certificate (HSC) results
	Leavers' questionnaire	Leavers' questionnaire	
Intellectual abilities and aptitudes:	Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT, field dependance—independance)	Teachers' questionnaire	
(a) The ACER Higher Test — form M (ML & MQ) linguistic and quantitative abilities)	Student essays — four topics		
(b) Listening Comprehension	School Certificate (SC) results		
(c) Vocabulary Knowledge			
(d) The Standard Progressive Matrices			
Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI)	Parent interviews with 690 families		

Our particular interest in migrant children led us to include some questions that applied only to students of non-English-speaking origin (e.g. questions on attendance at special classes for learning English and at ethnic schools, language spoken in the home) and others designed to tap the attitudes of the whole sample to migrants (e.g. 'Write a few lines in answer to the question: how have migrants settled into this country?'). After trying out a number of definitions of 'migrant', we decided to do the main preliminary data analysis in terms of the classifications of parents' birthplaces [as in Table 2, page 43]. The advantages of these classifications are that they allow us to examine the experience of those migrant groups with enough individuals in the sample to warrant separate treatment, they distinguish children of mixed and homogeneous ethnic background, and they distinguish migrant children of English-speaking background from both Australians and other migrants.

Research Methodology

Two Australian authors (Bullivant, 1978 and Poole, 1980) in their recent articles highlight some of the methodological dilemmas facing education researchers. When we developed methodological strategies for the study in 1974, we placed importance on the following:

(a) Because a major aim of the study was to investigate the comparative educational experience of Australian and migrant students, we had to insure that sufficient numbers of migrant students were included in our sampling net to make this possible. Even with the stratified cluster sample technique we employed, it was necessary to reach a sample size of over 3000 to insure that we could identify at least 50 migrant students in each of several common origin ethnic groups. As we expected, wide variations did occur in the number of students in the various groups (e.g. there were 1659 students with Australian born parents compared with 48 students with both parents born in Lebanon) and these wide number variations present problems for statistical analysis. On the other hand, our sample as a whole represents approximately 11 per cent of all Grade 9 students in Sydney. Most of our analyses range from simple frequency distributions to fairly complex cross-break analyses. The numbers used for these calculations are shown to assist the reader to interpret the results.

(b) As we sought to identify respondents' perceptions of social interactions which occur as one part of the education experience, we adopted data collection strategies which enabled the respondents to present their views via their own conceptions rather than via conceptions imposed on the situation by us. We were conscious also that many newly-arrived migrant students from non-English-speaking (NES) countries were experiencing English language difficulties. Therefore, we collected much of our data via open-ended questions which were designed for easy comprehension, and we limited our use of structured questions. Our use of open-ended responses makes the coding operation more difficult. The strategies we used for coding are described in Chapter 3 and Appendix B.

(c) Interviews with parents were tape-recorded and the complete conversations were typed by audio typists. When we planned the methodology for the parent interviews, we were aware that a sizable proportion of the parents who were born in NES countries could not speak English. Therefore, when one or both parents could not take part in the interview because of a lack of knowledge of English, a foreign language interviewer was engaged. Further details of the parent interview program are given in Chapter 4 and Appendix C.

(d) In the majority of analyses, we have prepared tables which indicate the range of viewpoints held by students in the whole sample. Guided by this knowledge of whole sample viewpoints, we have developed an extensive series of case studies. Where possible we have used data gained independently from two separate sources (i.e. students and parents) to build our case studies. As Adelman et al. (1976:143) point out, '...case study research offers a surrogate experience and invites the reader to underwrite the account, by appealing to his tacit knowledge of human situations'. The case studies are in the main detailed verbatim reports. They are designed to enable the reader to experience first-hand what the respondents in our survey are saying and thinking. We hope that readers may gain fresh insights from reading these 'insiders' views of the school experience' and that such insights will transcend the restrictions placed on interpretation by the research analyses we have employed. Fictitious names are used throughout the case studies.

To sum up, although our research utilised a large-scale survey research design, we did not wish to lose sight of the importance of individual participants. The analyses, which incorporate the whole sample, enable us to comment on the major trends and variations in perceptions of the schooling experience, while the case studies insure that individual viewpoints, perceptions and insights are not lost.

CHAPTER 3

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLING

INTRODUCTION

There are few studies which investigate students' perceptions of schooling. Several writers have drawn attention to the importance of utilising information on student needs in educational planning:

> In all the millions of words that are written annually about education, one viewpoint is invariably absent - that of the child, the client of the school. It is difficult to think of another sphere of social activity in which the opinions of the customer are so persistently overlooked.
>
> Blishen (1969:178)

> If educational researchers, teachers, and administrators devised programs based on actual or expressed needs of secondary students, in combination with their own philosophies, student alienation might decrease.
>
> Poole and Simkin (1978:86)

RELATED RESEARCH

Schools, School Organisation and Curriculum - General

Connell et al. (1975) summarise the nature of the reactions of over 9000 Sydney teenagers who participated in their study. The authors' impressions are that most students do not dislike school: they tolerate it without much feeling. Many teenagers do not see an obvious connection between school and society at large; for example, school is not considered to be related to the work going on throughout society. The experience of school is seen to be a somewhat one-sided and unbalanced one in which emphasis is placed on intellectual performance:

> The fundamental criterion is an intellectual one, and one geared to a rather limited range of intellectual performance, one that can mostly be displayed by pen on paper answers, that can be produced quickly in a restricted time, that can be graded into detailed percentages and compared with the performance of others on the same task, that can efficiently reproduce already stored ideas, and that can be performed individually without reference to friends or advisers. There

> is little scope in such a situation to demonstrate such things as social organisational abilities, or judgment of character or expressive behaviour, and they, consequently, tend to be less valued in school assessments.
>
> Connell et al. (1975:293)

Many teenagers do not perceive the school to be relevant to their needs (Fitzgerald, 1976). The fact that teenagers, especially in the lower forms, have only minimal responsibility for planning their own work and other school activities no doubt contributes to this perception (Connell et al., 1975). Fitzgerald et al. (1976) conclude from their Victorian investigation that students perceive themselves in terms of the definitions offered to them by the adults around them. Knight (1974) also draws attention to the 'powerlessness' of students as they pass through the school system. In D'Urso's (1974:111) view, this condition of powerlessness, '... cripples the human impulse for freedom through personal judgment and decision'.

Wright et al. (1978) conclude that the fact that they lack the status of young adults and do not have a say in decision making, is a major source of criticism by students of the secondary school. Wright and Headlam (1976) were disturbed by the degree to which students in their interview sample exhibited a sense of powerlessness, induced apathy and lack of personal and social confidence. While these authors acknowledge that this state of affairs may have roots beyond the classroom, they believe that '... schools are doing little to offset such feelings with experiences of personal and social efficacy' (p. 35).

In this area also, young people are placed in an ambiguous situation. As Linton (1945:68) states, 'We alternatively demand from them [young people] the obedience and submission of childhood and the initiative and acceptance of personal responsibilities which go with adult status.' This position is exacerbated when young people experience an extended period of family dependence as the result of prolonged education.

During this period, as Dunphy (1969:9) notes in his report of an investigation into Sydney teenage gangs, '... the adolescent is physically mature but is denied full participation in the central stratum of social interaction in his community'. One advantage of the extended period of dependence of youth is that they have a longer time to choose an occupation or specialise in a field of study; they are meanwhile protected by the school environment. However, over-protection is potentially counter-productive and could retard social development.

The picture that emerges from the related research is one which portrays youth being excluded from life in mainstream society by being locked into a school system (which many students perceive to be irrelevant to their needs). However, if they wish to be accredited, they have no choice but to endure the system. In their submission to the Committee of Inquiry (1979: 107), the State College of Victoria, Rusden, claim that, '...the separation of education and work can only lead to the rejection of education'. Smith and Orlosky (1975:111) also indicate that, 'In ever increasing numbers, the young are denied association with adults in the social functions by which society is sustained and advanced.' Students are segregated from others of different ages and they are separated from younger and older children outside the family. In particular, there is a lack of contact with elderly people.

Young people at school have a passive role with no responsibility - they are at school solely for their own benefit and therefore miss the kind of development that occurs through the assumption and discharge of responsibilities and the understanding needed to work with young children. Smith and Orlosky also favour more integration with adults as (p. 133) 'throughout history the very continuation of society has depended upon the intimate intermixture of adults and the young'.

The Panel on Youth concludes that schools as presently constituted fail to provide appropriate experiences in areas outside the formal academic curriculum:

> They do not provide extensive opportunity for managing one's affairs, they seldom encourage intense concentration on a single activity, and they are inappropriate settings for nearly all objectives involving responsibilities that affect others. Insofar as these other objectives are important for the transition to adulthood ... schools act to retard youth in this transition by monopolising their time for the narrow objectives that schools have.
>
> The Panel on Youth of the
> President's Science Advisory Committee (1974:146)

In Coleman's (1972a) view, the school can be described as 'information-rich but action-poor', as premium is put on the ability to observe and to absorb verbalised knowledge, whereas less importance is attached to the ability to be active and to apply absorbed knowledge. Husen (1972:162) explains: 'The pupil who masters the forms is rewarded, while the one who can master the practical real-life problems but not the verbal images through which they are seen at school is not.'

Coleman (1972b) is pessimistic that the schools are capable of bringing non-academic activities from real life into the classroom. He asserts that the history of such attempts reveals that the school transforms the task so that the young person is once again in the role of student, learning cognitive skills that can be tested via traditional paper and pencil tests. In Coleman's view, all young people need the non-intellective aspects of education.

Schools, School Organisation and Curriculum - Career Education

The absence of a provision of appropriate career education by schools is a topic that has received the attention of numerous researchers in recent years. It is also claimed that students are not being assisted sufficiently by schools to understand their emerging selves and integrate self and occupational identity. Morgan and Hart write that:

> Too many young people are leaving the education system unprepared for the demands which their new lifestyle will place upon them. At the same time they are unaware of their own abilities and ignorant of the range of occupational opportunities available.
>
> Morgan and Hart (1977:3)

However, the likelihood that a young person will be able to integrate self and occupational identity depends on the availability of jobs. As Reubens (1977:109) points out, '... an irreconcilable conflict exists between counselling for self-development and individual choice and counselling for the social objective of meeting labour market demands'.

The findings of several recent investigations support the claim that students are not being assisted sufficiently by schools to learn about the real world. From the results of a Melbourne study, Wright et al. (1978) draw attention to the discrepancy between what teenagers felt they should get from education and what they actually got. The major contrast was between the school's emphasis on academic qualifications and the students' convictions that the school should be facilitating their personal and social development and assisting them to understand life and its problems. In this study, a significant minority (18 per cent) believed they had gained nothing at all from their school experience. It appears that students exist in an unsatisfying, ambiguous no-man's land where they value the promises offered by education but are most disappointed by their own school experience.

> Students are in an ambivalent position with regard to academic qualifications, on the one hand seeing them as necessary for success, but on the other feeling that they are irrelevant to the real world.
>
> Wright et al. (1978:47)

In an earlier report on their Melbourne study, Wright and Headlam (1976) point out that the clear separation in so many young peoples' minds between schooling and 'the real world' is most marked.

Other authors report that the perceived irrelevance of the school curriculum by some groups of adolescents leads them to become alienated from the school (Bassett et al., 1978). Bassett et al. believe that this perceived irrelevance can best be understood in the light of a mismatch between the students' values and the school activities and emphases.

Using the results from a nationwide sample of sixteen-year-old boys and girls, Branson and Miller (1979) found that well under half of all students obtained a positive attitude score rating towards school and only 6.5 per cent held strongly positive attitudes. When the results were analysed on sex lines, a higher proportion of girls showed negative attitudes towards school.

The authors note:

> ... even more starkly evident was that approximately three-quarters of the students as a whole rejected the school system as a focus for achievement, articulating a clear alienation from the school environment.
>
> Branson and Miller (1979:78)

Branson and Miller point out that, for the majority of students in their survey, school was associated neither with pleasant nor preferred activities but was accepted with resignation. They found few class differences in the results, with most adolescents not being particularly concerned about doing well and showing no real inclination to identify with school. They add:

> This was especially so among adolescents from professional backgrounds who ... adopt a pragmatic attitude towards school achievement, one concerned with qualifying for further education rather than with the acquisition of knowledge.
>
> Branson and Miller (1979:88)

Other studies have investigated the occupational selection process in relation to young people. Ginzberg et al. (1951) sum up why many adolescents make occupational choices at a time when they are ill-fitted to do so. First, young people do not understand the complex nature of society and, second, they are undergoing deep-seated emotional experiences which obscure their basic needs and desires. One reason why young people do not understand society is that important sources of information are denied to them. This view is supported by Slocum:

> Young people in our society do not have very realistic perceptions of either the world of work or their own eventual occupational potential. This is not surprising in view of the difficulty of observing the performance of technical and professional occupational roles in contemporary society and the associated difficulty of reality testing of capabilities.
>
> Slocum (1966:186)

Daws (1970) believes that young people ought to select an occupation via some kind of self-actualising process. He stresses that vocational guidance should not only be concerned with entrance requirements, training, skill and wage rates, but attention should also be given to 'psycho-social' aspects of the worker and his life - for example, the characteristic ethos of the work environment deriving from the common language, purposes, styles of interaction, values and attitudes of those who work there:

> ... if young people are not to have the course of their personal development and their lives determined for them by the pressure of contingent cultural forces, like corks bobbing down a stream, they must be forearmed with self-knowledge and understanding of the possible future selves and the lives that are within their capacities to fashion.
>
> Daws (1970:72)

Research in Australia and overseas (outlined below) indicates that young people are handicapped in their career planning and preparation by a lack of information. Their career goals frequently are not substantiated by occupational realities, nor do they appear to be aware of the steps necessary to achieve their goals. Educational decisions are made without consideration of their occupational implications and, as we noted earlier, there is a lack of awareness of the community guidance services that are available. Taylor makes the following observation on the narrowness of occupational aspirations:

> One of the most definitive characteristics of the occupational structure of our society is the conspicuous absence of appropriate mechanisms of communicating occupational knowledge. Therefore, the entire array of some 20000 occupations are not systematically aspired to or, put another way, freedom to choose in a structure of ignorance is considerably less than real freedom.
>
> Taylor (1968:189)

An earlier study by the writer of 1021 upper secondary Sydney students found that three-quarters of the students surveyed can be classified as wanting either a 'great deal' or a 'fair amount' of information about further education courses and jobs available after high school (Meade, 1978). Other results are as follows:

> A higher proportion of the groups of students classified as coming from families of higher socio-economic status reported that their parents were most helpful in providing occupation information than the groups of students from lower socio-economic status families. In contrast, a higher proportion of those from lower socio-economic status backgrounds found people in the desired occupation and careers handbooks to be most helpful. Less than one-quarter of students found high school careers advisers to be most helpful in the

> provision of occupational information and less than one-eighth of students found teachers to be most helpful. Our inquiry has revealed the chaotic nature of the transition process in which many young people are involved as they move from school to post-school courses and jobs. The findings indicate an urgent need for much improved structures to provide young people with educational and occupation information.
>
> Meade (1978:160-1)

Tinney et al. (1974) lament that choice and decision making are usually important elements of any process of change, yet they appear to have little place in the transition from school to work. Tinney et al. believe that the move into the workplace appears to 'just happen' or to be influenced by negative factors rather than positive initiatives.

In a Tasmanian study, Behrens (1978) concludes that the school is quite unimportant as a source of information - only 15 per cent of respondents saw the school as the main source of labour market information. McGaw et al. (1977) demonstrate that students from country areas in Queensland are not only restricted by a limited range of available jobs but by a lack of information about jobs. Fitzgerald (1976 :119) concludes from the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty research reports that '...current vocational guidance services in all States of Australia are unhelpful and inadequate...' Musgrave and Wind (1978) indicate that the career information provided by the school is biased towards those leaving school at 18 as opposed to those who leave at 15 or 16. Fitzgerald (1976) points out that one important aspect of this bias is that it has had the effect of devaluing 'ordinary' jobs. Pryor and Hawkins from the Division of Vocational Guidance Services, N.S.W., conclude from their investigation:

> One of the most fundamental reasons for the lack of preparation for making career decisions on the part of many sixth form students is a dissatisfaction and disenchantement with existing careers assistance agencies. This study confirms... [that] ... specialist career agencies are rated helpful by less than a quarter of sixth formers.
>
> Pryor and Hawkins (1975:39)

Pryor and Hawkins found that the students want much more sociological information about careers. They also noted that people in the career or job were considered to be the most helpful source of occupational information.

Poole and Simkin sum up the comments of students in their Victorian inquiry:

> ... the overwhelming majority of students indicated that they wanted a much closer relationship between school and the world of work. Both leavers and stayers wanted more subjects related to their future jobs, more information about job entry qualifications and about managing in the early weeks of their first job. They also demanded that tha school provide help in their job choice decisions, by providing more information on careers, by allowing more contact with advisers, by arranging visits to factories and businesses, by providing more visiting speakers, and by setting up work-out programs where practical experience could be obtained, and later evaluated in classroom discussions.
>
> Poole and Simkin (1978:90)

The comments of the Victorian students are almost identical with those from the students in our earlier Sydney inquiry which illustrates the likely Australia-wide extent of the problem.

The [Australian]Schools Commission (1975b) draws attention to the problems girls experience in occupational choice. It also notes that girls experience conflict between sexual and vocational identity and that theories of occupational choice developed on men do not recognise this conflict. Sweet (1974) indicates in a Sydney report that vocational psychology is biased against women both in its theories and practices. In his opinion, present methods dampen and restrict girls' career options, ignore career choice contingencies which are particularly relevant for females (for example, role conflicts, child care, institutional prejudice and part-time work), and define vocational choice as primarily engaged in by males. The [Australian] Schools Commission reports evidence of sexism in vocational guidance:

> In examining vocational advice, what we find is that traditional attitudes and advice towards women entering the labour force predominate; careers literature and

> resource material is preoccupied with an out of date understanding of women and their changing contribution in the labour force.
>
> Schools Commission (1975b:126)

It is apparent that structural barriers in the areas of guidance services and job opportunities influence girls' occupational aspirations and achievements. In addition, a girl's understanding of self is likely to be confused by the potential dual conflicting roles of family and occupation.

Isaacson (1971) stresses that the classroom teacher has both an opportunity and a responsibility to assist students by the provision of career education. This need for career education in our schools is expressed by Fitzgerald in the following passage:

> Career education, we believe, would encourage schools to reorient their task from the current emphasis on preparation of students for tertiary entrance towards preparing students for school exit at different stages and in response to their different needs.
>
> Fitzgerald (1976 :125)

Young (1977) points out that the new technologies and service industries have created a middle range of job opportunities that call for one or two years training beyond high school. In fact, it is likely that the majority of jobs will not require a degree. Ottina stresses that career educators need to be aware of this trend.

> ... all this says we need to stop indoctrinating our young people with the notion that any career aspiration not based on an academic or professional degree is somehow demeaning, somehow unworthy of becoming one's life goal. To continue this fallacious idea is a disservice to our young people.
>
> Ottina (1973:85)

D'Cruz and Sheehan (1978) also emphasise the need for a fundamental rethinking of the position of preparation for work in education. But a number of writers object to the predominance of educational institutions in the transition from school to work. For example, Reubens writes:

> Many who believe that young people need assistance in the transition are sceptical that teachers or school-based counsellors, even with specialised training, can provide the whole range of transition services. Teachers are widely seen as knowing little about diverse occupations or the world of work and as being competent to speak only about teaching.
>
> Reubens (1977:32)

Schools, School Organisation and Curriculum - Early School Leavers

In the last decade a number of Australian researchers have investigated the school experience of early school leavers. Fitzgerald et al.(1976) conclude from the results of several investigations that many early school leavers are frustrated, fed up, and generally deeply alienated from schooling. In a Tasmanian study, Behrens (1978) indicates that early school leavers left mostly because of financial problems or because they disliked school or were bored with it.

In a Melbourne study, Poole and Jones (1976) report that the reason most often mentioned for early school leaving was associated with a dislike or disinterest in school generally. Reasons given in rank order from most to least frequently mentioned were: boredom, dislike of school (in the specific comments made in this category, teachers were most often mentioned), wanting to work or start vocational training, inability to cope with school work and financial considerations.

Wright and Headlam conclude from their Victorian survey that early school leavers experience school at its worst on almost every measure of the quality of school life:

- they left in the crowded early-middle secondary years when it was most impersonal;
- pressures for achievement combined with apparent irrelevance produced restlessness, 'stirring', challenging of authority, and often authoritarian reactions from teachers;
- 70 per cent left with little or no idea of what they wanted to do, with only 11 per cent considering that they had adequate vocational guidance;

> - streaming, and similar competitive processes underlined failure in the academic achievement so highly valued by schools, and provided a subtle and negative form of vocational guidance, so that some sort of a 'push-out' was occurring. In fact a considerable number of them reported that the school was glad to see them go.
>
> Wright and Headlam (1976:50)

But Wright and Headlam also stress that among those who leave school before completing secondary school are groups of young people who were the happiest and most satisfied in their whole sample as well as those who were the most unhappy and frustrated. The former group included apprentices and nurses who formally combine working and learning while the latter group included the 'dead-end jobbers' without prospects.

Knight (1977) undertook a study of school stayers and school leavers at Brunswick Girls High School in Melbourne. He indicates that student commitment and participation within the existing status system of school depend on a number of variables: successful marks, decision-making involvement, participation in extra-curricular activities, and the absence of negativism from teachers concerning student ability. The group of school leavers in Knight's study consistently demonstrated a degree of weakened commitment on all these measures. Almost half the leaver group felt that they left school without the preparation they needed to enter the work world.

The Committee of Inquiry into Secondary Education draws attention to criticisms of secondary schools indicating that early school leavers had:

> ... found school to be an unrewarding experience, and that many were emotionally or intellectually unprepared for work or further education and would have life-long problems of employment. The New South Wales T.A.F.E. Council considered that schools sometimes did their best to insulate pupils from practical concerns, including thoughts of a job. The Conference of Principals of Queensland T.A.F.E. Institutions considered that the excessive academic bias both in the curricula and in the measurement of achievement gave little encouragement to average and below average performers, for whom continued but unsuccessful school attendance beyond Grade 10 did not appear to enhance employment prospects.
>
> Committee of Inquiry (1979:107)

Student Perceptions of Teachers

Several studies investigate students' perceptions of teachers and their views of the 'ideal' teacher. In a study based on 1000 essays on the topic 'The School for Me' written by boys and girls aged 11 to 18, Humphreys and Newcombe (1975) report that some children feel isolated from their teachers, believe that teachers are untrusting and preoccupied with maintaining their authority, resent the condescension of teachers, and are keenly aware of little things smacking of hypocrisy from teachers - the 'do as I say, not as I do' attitude. The authors indicate that not all the essays were critical of teachers: 'The students recognised that they had some good qualities, but overall they saw teachers simply as people who were doing a job, like everyone else' (p. 112).

Connell et al. (1975) indicate that punishment by the teacher, especially arbitrary punishment, is deeply resented. Although some students want more teacher discipline while others want less, both groups request civility from teachers. Strong criticisms are made that some teachers are brusque and uncivil. The authors note:

> If cooperation between teacher and teenager is to be genuine, and to be an important part of the teenager's education, teachers will have to be seen to be persons of humanity and civility who are willing to encourage their pupils to share authority and responsibility with them.
>
> Connell et al. (1975:297)

Some students in the study by Connell and his co-researchers had the impression that teachers underrated their intelligence and did not try very hard with students who were labelled as slow learners. Humiliation experienced in relationships with teachers was very distressing to many students.

Wright and Headlam report that the young people in their Victorian survey almost took for granted that teachers must be competent, know their subject and be able to get it across, and be able to control classes. They stressed the importance of interpersonal relations in the classroom:

> The qualities looked for in teachers were: 'respecting students, not just teaching you as pupils, but to realise they are people'; '[treating students] as adults not as kids'; 'willing to help you when you're in difficulties'; 'willing to become involved with students'; this personal relationship becoming the point of engagement between student and teacher, in which teaching and learning become a cooperative venture.
>
> They were universally critical of the 'impersonal teachers, the nine-to-five job types'; the teachers who 'mark hard and lack sympathy'; the 'standover types'; those who 'wouldn't listen' or 'wouldn't get involved with students'; or 'didn't teach us anything'.
>
> Wright and Headlam (1976:23)

As we indicated in the previous section, early school leavers place a great deal of importance on poor relationships with teachers as a major reason for leaving school. The findings of the research studies indicate that teachers place insufficient emphasis on giving them personal attention to help them with their problems. For example, Tinney et al., who undertook a study of early school leavers at Fitzroy High School in Melbourne, believe that teachers are giving insufficient individual attention to students in the early-middle secondary years:

> They were on the whole, 'good' teachers and trying to do the 'right thing' but failed to be interested in the students as individuals until they reached the higher forms, and even then, interest was variable.
>
> Tinney et al. (1974:46)

Relationship with Peers

School provides the opportunity for a teenager to interact with peers. Connell et al. indicate that on the evidence of their study teenagers are very sociable creatures indeed:

> Their peer groups are widespread, and their social interests are dominant; they delight in opportunities for conversation and activities in groups, they constantly study to acquire the behaviour that wins social approval, and carefully watch the impression they make on others.
>
> Connell et al. (1975:500)

But these authors believe that, apart from arranging formal team activities, few schools provide a climate of sufficient emotional warmth to encourage the teenagers to learn the skills and attitudes of cooperative work and enjoyment they are obviously ready for.

Other studies investigate the influence that the aspirations held by a student's peers have on the student's own aspirations (see Meade, 1978). These studies document the congruence in the educational aspirations of students and their close friends.

Suggestions to Improve Schooling

Several studies report young people's suggestions to improve school (Collins and Hughes, 1979; Connell et al., 1975; Fitzgerald et al., 1976; Poole and Jones, 1976; Poole and Simkin, 1978; Meade, 1978; Wright et al., 1978).

Improvement in teacher-student relationships features highly. Students desire positive and satisfactory relationships with teachers. They want teachers who are reliable, are worthy of respect, are civil, are understanding and friendly, are human and approachable and are not far-off authority figures, demonstrate care about the students, are able to control classes, give individual attention, allow students to express their own opinions, and who try to create more interest in their subjects.

A majority of students want a much closer relationship between school and the world of work. They also want more subjects related to their future jobs together with knowledge and skills that are directly relevant to finding and holding jobs. They want to be better informed about the entry requirements of further education institutions.

Students believe that subjects should be introduced which will contribute to preparation for life and its problems, including personal and social development and understanding. Not all students agree on the priorities. Some want more academically inclined subjects while others want less.

However, in their study on the Expectations of Secondary Schools, by students, teachers and parents, Hughes found that considerable areas of agreement exist:

> ... there is considerable agreement between students, parents and teachers on in what directions schools need to put more effort. Although the rank order is not identical, all see Practical, Personal Autonomy and Social Awareness as areas which need considerably more attention.
>
> Collins and Hughes (1978:156)

The most important differences between the three groups were in their ratings of the importance of job-related practical goals. Students viewed these practical goals as being of the highest importance, teachers viewed the development in students of personal autonomy and social awareness as being of highest importance, while parents agreed with teachers on the personal autonomy goals and with students on the job-related practical goals.

Collins and Hughes conclude from their study, which included schools from New South Wales and Victoria, that secondary schools should improve the teaching of the following:

> - clear and effective speaking;
> - knowledge and skills that are directly relevant to finding and holding jobs;
> - clearly practical skills including fringe areas like money management;
> - the knowledge and skills which lead to personal autonomy. These include self-understanding and self-confidence as well as rationality, the ability to find information and independent work attitudes;
> - an understanding of social issues (parents are less sure of this);
> - manners and punctuality (students agree only marginally with this).
>
> Collins and Hughes (1978:157)

They report that schools are doing fairly well at teaching such aspects as the traditional basics, conformity and perseverance, and the sciences. However, they also point out that schools may be doing more than their importance warrants in the areas of sport, and most academic and cultural subjects.

A recent Queensland report into youth comments on the need for students to be prepared for life and its problems (Commission of Inquiry into Youth, 1975). The report suggests that there is inadequate provision in education programs for the development of moral values in youth and recommends that the Department of Education should develop courses in: human relationships, individual and community responsibilities and decision making. Students also indicate that they would like to have more say in the decision-making process in schools. Relaxation in what are considered to be petty school rules is called for, e.g. rules on school uniforms, other rules relating to personal dress and prohibitions on smoking. Finally, requests are made for better 'school conditions', e.g. more sporting facilities, better buildings, and classrooms, improved lunchtime facilities and smaller classes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problems of Teenagers

In this section we report students' perceptions of the problems of teenagers as a backdrop to an analysis of their perceptions of the educational experience. This approach enables us to place students' perceptions of the educational experience in the general context of issues of concern to them.

In their Grade 10 year students were asked: 'What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?' (There were 180 early school leavers who responded to this question via a mail questionnaire and their comments are included in the analysis). Approximately 7800 'problems' were mentioned by the students (Table 2). We used Havighurst's theoretical analysis of the developmental tasks of adolescence as a guide to classification of the comments (Havighurst, 1952). However, as some of the 'problems' raised by respondents could not be classified under Havighurst's schemata it was necessary to add severa' extra categories while other Havighurst categories were combined.

Almost half the 'problems' raised by students were concerned with the 'development of personal independence' and 'getting on with parents' featured

TABLE 2

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WHICH TEENAGERS TODAY HAVE TO OVERCOME?'

(Number of respondents = 2,873) (a)

Category	Total Responses (b)		Male		Female		Parents' Country of Birth							
							Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	
	NC(c)	%(d)	NC	%	NC	%	NC	%	NC	%	NC	%	NC	%
Adolescent peer group (V1)														
The problem of achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes:														
Socialisation with peers	497	6	208	6	289	7	277	6	117	7	68	5	25	8
The problem of achieving a masculine or feminine social role:														
Sex	322	4	203	6	119	3	193	4	60	4	53	4	9	3
The pressure of conformity with the peer groups:														
The problems of whether or not to conform	97	1	29	1	68	2	52	1	22	1	16	1	7	2
Keeping up with fashion	56	1	21	1	35	1	33	1	17	1	6	1	..	..
SUB-TOTAL (V1)	972	(12)	461	(13)	511	(12)	555	(13)	216	(13)	140	(11)	41	(13)
The problem of accepting one's body (V2)														
Pimples	180	2	92	3	88	2	102	2	33	2	36	3	7	2
Physical appearance and health problems	91	1	27	1	64	2	56	1	14	1	13	1	5	2
SUB-TOTAL (V2)	271	(3)	119	(3)	152	(4)	158	(4)	47	(3)	49	(4)	12	(4)
Development of personal independence (V3)														
The problem of achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults:														
The desire for independence	223	3	78	2	145	3	116	3	64	4	30	2	10	3
Getting on with parents	1,052	13	321	9	731	17	668	13	249	15	158	12	82	16
Problems with the family	90	1	34	1	56	1	46	1	24	1	16	1	3	(b)..
Relationships with the older generation: communication, discrimination	446	6	195	5	251	6	260	6	92	6	70	5	17	5
Bad influence of the older generation	48	1	20	1	28	1	24	1	15	1	7	1	2	..
The problems of achieving assurance of economic independence:														
The desire for financial independence	558	7	313	8	245	6	314	7	108	7	101	8	21	6
Selecting and preparing for an occupation:														
The effects of increased unemployment	398	5	234	6	164	4	223	5	72	4	73	6	21	6
Dissatisfaction with work	106	1	44	1	62	1	61	1	23	1	16	1	4	..
Difficulties of selecting job	70	1	32	1	38	1	42	1	15	1	10	1	3	..
Maturing:														
Difficulties of coping with adulthood	280	4	120	3	160	4	155	3	63	4	46	4	14	4
Stress and emotional changes	317	4	118	3	199	5	168	4	72	4	55	4	19	6
SUB-TOTAL (V3)	3,588	(46)	1,509	(42)	2,079	(48)	1,877	(45)	797	(49)	582	(48)	196	(51)

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TABLE 2 (Continued)

Category	Total Responses (b)		Male		Female		Parents' Country of Birth							
							Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	
	NC	%	NC	%	NC	%	NC	%	NC	%	NC	%	NC	%
The development of socially responsible behaviour (V4)														
Moral issues and personal attributes perceived as negative qualities	99	1	35	1	64	2	61	1	26	2	18	1	4	..
Drugs	577	7	257	7	320	7	339	8	100	6	105	8	19	6
Alcohol	170	2	86	2	84	2	118	3	28	2	19	2	7	2
Smoking	156	2	77	2	79	2	83	2	30	2	29	2	4	..
Police and crime	120	2	93	3	27	1	74	2	16	1	23	2	4	..
Resentment against authority	58	1	34	1	24	1	32	1	11	1	11	1	1	..
SUB-TOTAL (V4)	1,180	(15)	582	(16)	598	(14)	684	(16)	220	(13)	205	(16)	39	(12)
Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour (V5)														
Understanding and self-expression	70	1	30	1	40	1	41	1	11	1	14	1	4	..
Concern about the future of oneself	92	1	45	1	47	1	51	1	21	1	16	1	4	..
Religion	8	..	..	..	8	..	6	..	1	..	1	..	..	..
SUB-TOTAL (V5)	170	(2)	75	(2)	95	(2)	98	(2)	33	(2)	31	(2)	8	(2)
Problems related to the use of leisure (V6)														
Boredom, desire to go out, lack of entertainment	340	4	142	4	198	5	179	4	69	4	70	5	16	5
The need for transport and problems arising therefrom	130	2	93	3	37	1	90	2	17	1	19	2	9	3
SUB-TOTAL (V6)	470	(6)	235	(7)	235	(6)	269	(6)	86	(5)	89	(7)	25	(8)
Problems related to school (V7)														
The institution	398	5	203	6	195	5	222	5	83	5	67	5	15	5
Problems concerning: homework, study, exams	274	3	137	4	137	3	160	4	60	4	43	3	6	2
Relationship with teachers	121	2	57	2	64	2	75	2	17	1	21	2	3	..
SUB-TOTAL (V7)	793	(10)	397	(11)	396	(9)	457	(10)	160	(10)	131	(10)	24	(7)
Problems of learning to socialise (V8)	93	1	36	1	57	1	52	1	24	2	11	1	4	..
Community problems which teenagers are concerned about (V9)														
General	113	1	46	1	67	2	63	1	27	2	14	1	7	2
Violence	79	1	52	1	27	1	59	1	11	1	6	1	1	..
Migrant problems	32	..	24	1	8	..	19	..	7	..	4	..	..	..
Discrimination	32	..	14	..	18	..	21	1	5	..	4	..	1	..
Politics	11	..	6	..	5	..	7	..	1	..	3	..	..	..
SUB-TOTAL (V9)	267	(3)	142	(4)	125	(3)	169	(4)	51	(3)	31	(2)	9	(3)
Uncoded (V10)	31	..	20	1	11	..	18	..	5	..	6	1	..	..
GRAND TOTAL	7,835	100	3,576	100	4,259	100	4,437	100	1,639	100	1,275	100	328	100

(a) The number of respondents is less than the number of students answering the Grade 10 questionnaire, as some students did not answer this question.

(b) Cell frequencies for the responses of the total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by parents' country of birth, due to the inclusion of responses by students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

(c) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

(d) Average number of responses per respondent = 2.9 indicating that the majority listed three problems as requested. Most mentioned three quite different problems. Hence proportion of responses corresponds closely to proportion of respondents.

strongly as one element of this classification. Girls mentioned 'getting on with parents' as a problem much more frequently than boys. Other problems frequently mentioned in this classification were problems of: 'relationships with the older generation', 'desire for financial independence' and 'the effects of increased unemployment' as a factor which might interfere with such financial independence. No major distribution variations were apparent when the comments were classified by parents' country of birth.

Problems concerned with 'the development of socially responsible behaviour' constituted a sizable proportion of the total problems raised. In particular, 'drugs' were mentioned as a teenage problem by over 500 respondents. No major distribution variations were apparent when the problems were classified by sex or when they were classified by parents' country of birth.

Problems concerned with the 'adolescent peer group' made up 12 per cent of all problems raised. The majority of comments classified under this heading refer to problems of achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes and the problem of achieving a masculine or feminine social role. The latter problem was raised more frequently by boys than girls. No major distribution variations were apparent when we classified responses by parents' country of birth.

Problems related to school constituted 10 per cent of the total response. General problems relating to the school as an institution featured most prominently in this classification. Problems concerning 'homework study and examinations' and 'relationship with teachers' were also raised. No marked variations in distributions occurred when responses were further classified by sex and by parents' country of birth.

Other problems raised by students were: 'problems related to the use of leisure', e.g. lack of entertainment, transport problems, 'the problem of accepting one's body', e.g. pimples and problems of physical appearance, 'community problems', e.g. violence, migrant problems, 'problems of acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour', e.g. self-understanding, concern about the future of oneself, and 'problems of learning to socialise' which do not specifically mention peers or the older generation.

With the exception that girls mentioned the problem 'getting on with parents' more frequently than boys, there were no major sex distribution variations apparent in the responses. Nor were there major distribution variations when the responses were classified by the parents' country of birth.

The majority of problems raised by students was associated with the development of personal independence which included developing emotional independence from adults. Students were also concerned with the development of socially responsible behaviour and achieving satisfying relationships in the peer group. We can conclude from the analysis of teenager problems that problems related to school did not feature highly as a difficult teenage problem to overcome in comparison with other problems that were percéived by students to be important.

Good Things and Problems of School

Students' perceptions of schooling were analysed in response to the question, 'What do you think are the good things and what are the problems of school?'

Much of the research on students' perceptions of schooling attempts to measure these perceptions via a series of structured questions to which students are asked to indicate the level of intensity of their agreement/ disagreement (e.g. 12 to 20 Studies of City Youth by Connell et al., 1975). However, we were dissatisfied with this approach for three reasons. We were aware from our population survey that many newly arrived migrant students from non-English-speaking (NES) countries were experiencing English language difficulties, and we could not be sure what meaning the student placed on the structured statements. We were conscious of the subtle social pressures that such questionnaires place on respondents, i.e. it would be socially unacceptable for a student who 'participates voluntarily' in a school survey to refuse to tick any box at all associated with a certain statement on the grounds that he or she had never really thought deeply enough about the issue raised. Of course, some students do refuse to tick boxes, but the temptation is to tick a box and not cause any 'hassles'. But more importantly, questions which only permit answers which are limited to fixed alternatives deny us information about reality from the point of view of the respondent. Lazarfeld and Barton (1955:84) have stressed the importance of 'adaption of the respondent's frame of reference', and more recently Montgomery and Crittenden have stated:

> If the original codes, based on categories of interest to the investigator, fail to take into account the respondent's frame of response, the _a posteriori_ methods can hardly be expected to eliminate this source of unreliability. On the other hand, a set of categories developed empirically from the response to be coded will reflect the point of view of the respondent. Informed by this point of view, the investigator still has the responsibility of defining the categories in such a way as to preserve pertinent theoretical distinctions.
>
> Montgomery and Crittenden (1977:236-7)

Further details of the methodology of open-ended analysis and an illustration of the coding method employed is shown in Appendix B.

The open-ended analysis utilises 'students as reporters', and the first set of analyses summarises the comments made by the student group. The fact that some students made more comments than others is not taken into account in this first set of analyses. By reviewing the set of comments made by each student, it was possible to access each student's attitude to issues of interest to the inquiry and a second set of tables addresses this question.

The analysis of comments enables us to identify 'good things' and 'problems' of schooling as perceived by the 3043 students in the inquiry. Case studies of individual student responses are used to illustrate the opinions expressed by students. Further illustrative material is provided by student responses to an essay entitled 'How does school affect teenagers?' Approximately one-third of the students completed this essay during a normal English period.

The open-ended analyses of comments by the group of students, and of individual student attitudes, give an objective overview of important areas of student concern while the case studies illustrate student ideas in a related context and also portray the intense emotion that many students displayed in their answers. Several criteria were used to guide selection of the case studies. Responses were selected if they were perceptive, if they were witty or humorous, if they were naive, or if they illustrate extreme positive or negative attitudes. We used the analyses of comments and student attitudes as a further guide in the selection of case studies to ensure that the case studies were representative of student views.

Good Things and Problems of School - Analysis of Comments

A summary of student comments concerning 'good things' and 'problems' is shown in Table 3. The majority of comments made by students addressed the issue of 'lesson: content, organisation and assessment'. Comments on this issue were equally distributed between 'good things' and 'problems'. General comments about school and schooling (i.e. the functions of schooling) were mentioned next in order of frequency. A higher proportion of comments on this issue was classified as 'good things'.

Nineteen per cent of the comments referred to the issue of 'teachers and their personal and professional qualities'. A sizable majority of comments on this issue were in the 'problem' category, i.e. a majority of those students who elected to comment on teachers in response to the question asked, tended to see teachers as problems.

'Peers and peer relationships' drew more positive comments than problems, while the majority of comments on the issues of 'buildings, equipment and grounds' and 'rules and discipline' were classified as problems.

School - General

Twenty-one per cent of all comments made by students were about general aspects of school and most of the comments made were positive (Table 4). Students favour the instrumental value of schooling: it provides the opportunity for education and for improved quality of life; it provides an education for the workforce, and it develops an understanding of life and people; it develops self; it is good; and it keeps you occupied.

In the area of problems, uniforms featured highly, and the next most

TABLE 3

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GOOD THINGS AND WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL?'

Summary

Category under discussion	NC (b)	% of grand total of all comments in all areas	Good things (a)		Problems	
			NC	% of grand total of all comments in all areas	NC	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
General comments about: school, schooling (c)	2,016	21	1,495	15	521	5
Lesson: content, organisation, assessment	2,852	29	1,419	15	1,433	15
Peers, peer relationships	1,416	15	951	10	465	5
Rules, discipline	697	7	36	--	661	7
Buildings, equipment, grounds	844	9	293	3	551	6
Teachers and their personal, professional qualities	1,861	19	336	3	1,525	16
TOTALS	9,686(d)	100	4,530	47	5,156	53

(a) Comments were arranged into six categories, each of which is sub-divided into 'good things' and 'problems'.

(b) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

(c) Further details for each category are given in Tables 4, 8, 10, 11 except that no table is included for the category, 'buildings, equipment, grounds' in response to this question.

(d) There were 9,686 valid comments offered by 2,640 students, i.e. if a particular student made three comments, these were recorded opposite the relevent category.

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TABLE 4

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GOOD THINGS AND WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL?'

General Comments about: school, schooling

Comments in rank order	NC (a)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Good Things			
School provides the opportunity for education	498	25	5
School is: good, enjoyable	315	16	3
School provides education for the workforce	276	14	3
School develops an understanding of: life, people	138	7	1
School develops: independence, responsibility, maturity, self-confidence	89	4	1
School keeps you occupied	88	4	1
School provides the opportunity for improved quality of life	49	2	1
Other	42	2	..
Sub-total	1,495	(74)	(15)
Problems			
Uniforms, the compulsory wearing of uniforms	221	11	2
School is: bad, unenjoyable, boring	205	10	2
Students do not have sufficient participation in decision-making, senior students only are on the school tribunal	38	2	..
School fails to consider student: needs, interests	30	1	..
Other	27	..	..
Sub-total	521	(26)	(5)
TOTAL	2,016	100	21

(a) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

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frequently mentioned problem referred to school as bad, unenjoyable and boring. There were relatively few students who said that school fails to consider students' needs or fails to give students sufficient participation in decision-making.

The tables discussed in this stage were developed by utilising comments made by 'students as reporters'. However, as some students' replies were broken into several 'codes', it was decided (as we discussed previously) to examine the attitude of individual students to each of the aspects of schooling analysed, by investigating all the comments made by each particular student. Thus each student who referred to a particular issue was classified on the basis of the number of positive (attitude) comments, the number of negative (attitude) comments and the number of neutral (attitude) comments he or she made. It is important to note that the chief researcher, rather than the coder, made the judgmental decision regarding positive or negative or neutral attitudes.

There were 46 per cent of students who made comments on 'school - general' (Table 5). (Students' attitudes to lessons and peers, etc. are also shown on this Table for ease of presentation. The discussion of these results is made under the appropriate headings later in the chapter). Thirty-seven per cent of students made positive comments, 7 per cent made negative comments and 3 per cent made both positive and negative comments. Proportionally more girls made positive comments than boys. Almost one half of the group of students whose parents were both born in NES countries made positive comments about 'school - general' compared with approximately one-third of the group of students with Australian-born parents. This result highlights the tendency for students of NES migrant origin to utilise schooling for its instrumental value.

The results of student attitudes to 'school - general' were further classified by various combinations of IQ and socio-economic status (SES) (Table 6). A comparison of the proportion of students with positive attitudes to 'school - general' in the higher SES group with those in the lower SES group revealed that interaction occurred with the variable 'parents' country of birth'. A higher proportion of lower SES student groups whose parents were born in a NES country exhibited positive attitudes to 'school -

TABLE 5

STUDENT ATTITUDES AS SHOWN IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION : 'WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GOOD THINGS AND WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL?'

Sample description	Percentage distribution:																			
	School – general				Lessons				Peers				Rules				Teachers			
	Pos.	Neg.	Pos. & neg.	No resp.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos. & neg.	No resp. (c)	Pos.	Neg.	Pos. & neg.	No resp.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos. & neg.	No resp.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos. & neg.	No resp.
Total Sample (a) (N = 2,640) (c)	37	7	3	54	21	13	8	58	28	11	6	55	1	20	(b)	79	5	35	6	54
Sex: Male (N = 1,203)	33	7	2	58	22	10	6	61	21	10	5	64	1	17	..	82	7	30	5	58
Female (N = 1,437)	40	7	3	50	20	15	10	55	34	11	7	47	1	22	..	76	5	39	6	50
Parents' Country of Birth:																				
Both Australian (N = 1,521)	33	8	2	58	22	12	9	57	31	11	6	51	1	22	..	77	6	37	6	51
Both non-English-speaking countries (N = 512)	49	5	3	43	20	15	6	58	23	12	6	59	..	16	..	83	5	30	5	60
Another or different English-speaking countries (N = 444)	39	6	3	53	20	12	9	59	25	10	7	58	3	19	..	78	7	32	7	54
One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country (N = 109)	31	11	..	58	22	9	9	60	26	6	5	63	—	18	..	80	5	38	6	51

(a) Cell frequencies for total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by Parents' Country of Birth, due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

(b) Where cell frequencies are less than five, no percentages are shown.

(c) N represents the number of students who responded to this question.

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TABLE 6

STUDENT ATTITUDES AS SHOWN IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GOOD THINGS AND WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL?'

School – general, lessons by IQ by socio-economic status
(N = 2,412)(a)

Linguistic and quantitative IQ (ML + MQ)	Socio-economic status	Percentage distribution: Parents' Country of Birth																			
		Both Australian				Both non-English-speaking countries				Another or different English-speaking countries				One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country				Total			
		School – general		Lessons		School – general		Lessons		School – general		Lessons		School – general		Lessons		School – general		Lessons	
		Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.
Higher (107–135)	Higher (ANU status categories 1–8)	37	7	23	16	42	..	19	19	44	..	28	16	40	–	30	–	39	5	23	16
	Lower (ANU status categories 9–16)	32	6	26	13	52	6	22	20	42	9	22	11	31	14	–	–	37	7	24	14
Lower (70–106)	Higher	32	4	22	9	48	–	21	13	37	2	16	11	16	31	–	–	34	5	21	11
	Lower	31	13	17	9	51	6	20	12	28	6	16	7	32	10	19	–	37	10	18	10
Total Higher IQ		35	6	24	14	49	5	21	19	43	6	23	14	38	..	23	8	38	6	23	15
Total Lower IQ		31	10	19	9	51	6	19	13	31	5	15	9	27	16	22	11	36	8	18	10
	Total Higher SES	35	6	23	13	46	..	20	18	42	..	22	16	33	–	30	–	38	5	23	13
	Total Lower SES	31	9	22	12	51	6	21	16	36	8	19	9	32	12	17	8	37	8	21	12
GRAND TOTAL		33	8	22	12	50	5	21	16	38	6	20	11	32	11	22	9	37	7	22	12

(a) Percentages are based on a sample of 2,412, as some students did not answer this question. The distribution of the total sample of 2,740 can be obtained from Table 1, Ap.A. There were 228 students for whom SES was not known.

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general' in comparison with the upper SES group. This result is in contrast to the remaining student classifications on the 'parents' country of birth' variable. One explanation of this finding is that a number of NES migrant parents may have accepted lower SES occupations in Australia in comparison with their home country because of English-speaking problems. Another explanation is that many lower SES migrant parents may have migrated to Australia because of a strong desire to improve educational prospects for their children.

We also calculated student attitudes to 'school - general' by the grade they left school. There were 8 per cent of students who left school before the school certificate (SC) (leavers 1); 49 per cent who left school after the SC (leavers 2) and 44 per cent who remained at school after SC (school stayers). More school stayers (44 per cent) made positive comments about 'school - general' in comparison with leavers 2 (31 per cent) and leavers 1 (33 per cent); 3 per cent of school stayers made negative comments about 'school - general' in comparison with 9 per cent of the leavers 2 group and 15 per cent of the leavers 1 group. We can conclude that school leavers tend to be less convinced about the instrumental worth of schooling in comparison with school stayers.

The attitudes of students to the instrumental value of school are portrayed via case studies. As most students did not restrict their comments to a single issue, other aspects of schooling (to be discussed shortly) also permeate the case studies. Students were in the age range 15 to 17 years when they responded to the questions used to develop the case studies. The following background information is provided on each student to assist interpretation.

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(a) Intellectual ability (IQ) assessed in Grade 9 via the A.C.E.R. ML + MQ test (for the whole sample mean IQ is 107.2, standard deviation 15.2).

(b) Educational aspirations to complete secondary school.

(c) School Accreditation (see Martin and Meade, 1979a) based on school certificate (SC) and higher school certificate (HSC) results and divided into seven categories:

    (i) high HSC results (11 per cent of students)
    (ii) medium HSC results (13 per cent of students)
    (iii) low HSC results (11 per cent of students)

(iv) high SC results and left school (11 per cent of students)
(v) medium SC results and left school (19 per cent of students)
(vi) low SC results and left school (28 per cent of students)
(vii) left school before SC (8 per cent of students).

(d) Country of birth of student and age on arrival if born overseas.

(e) Parents' country of birth.

Fictitious names are used but the original spelling, sentence composition and punctuation are preserved. Students made the following comments in response to the essay topic, 'How does school affect teenagers?' When a student whose parents participated in the home interview program is selected, relevant details of the home situation are also provided.

Rosalie Sweida, IQ = 128 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium HSC. Rosalie was born in Australia and her father and mother were born in Poland and East Germany respectively; Mr Sweida is a senior technical officer in the R.A.N. and Mrs Sweida is an accountant.

> I think that High School is very important for teenagers as it broadens your outlook on life and adds to your knowledge of subjects. The most important subject is, I think English as in most cases it helps you to overcome shyness and helps you to come out with your views instead of keeping them inside you.
>
> [extract]

Kurt Reiger, IQ = 134 (high) aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Kurt and his parents were born in Germany; he arrived in Australia aged 4. Mr Reiger is an electrical engineer and Mrs Reiger an assistant hospital matron.

> Education is in many instances repressed rather than encouraged, ie. teachers in schools, in the same way as social authorities, are bent on the maintenance of order, irrespective of its validity or a given circumstance.
>
> Fairly soon children are consequently obsessed with the breaking of school laws and 'getting away with it', rather than learning.
>
> The above school laws demand that males are a 'different race' from females. The inculcating of out dated etiquett in fact teaches us (or at least trys) that males are far

superior to females.

It is taught that to show affection for someone is the object of odium.

Individuallity is also repressed and conformity is encouraged especially in English (generally). This is not the truth about life - people are individual. The teaching of such absurdities promotes iniquity in society, and I'm not merely talking about uniform clothing. Incidently one finds school-goers wear uniforms outside school also and as a consequence of their school training will continue to do so.

There is much more I have need to write of, but as a result of order this will be lost as I now have to struggle through corridors and start something new, this remains unfinished.

[complete essay]

Warren Stanley, IQ = 103 (medium), did not aspire to the HSC in Grade 9 and Grade 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Warren and his father were born in Australia and Mrs Stanley was born in New Zealand. Mr Stanley is a carpenter and Mrs Stanley a cleaner.

> Some teenagers agree with school and some don't. But myself, I'd say that a majority likes school they meet knew friends and get along with life better. The occasional stirr with the teachers often leaks out but other than that some teenagers will work willingly.

[extract]

Warren aspired to be a motor mechanic in Grades 9 and 10. In Grade 10 he said that his mother would be disappointed if he did not go on to the HSC but his father would not be. In response to the question on the influence that his father and mother had had on his hopes about education and jobs, Warren stated: 'They feel education is important.' He also pointed out that his older brother, '...keeps telling me schooling is important but I already know its important'.

In response to the question: 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', Warren wrote 'interesting and nice people'. Yet, he wrote 'teachers' in the first position on a list indicating the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome.

Warren said that he left school when he did, '...because I thought I could get the job I wanted'. He responded 'slightly yes' to the question, 'Would you have liked to stay longer at secondary school?' At the time of his response to the leavers' questionnaire, Warren had a job as a garage attendant. He indicated that this was not the job he wanted in the long run. He still hoped to obtain a job as a refrigeration mechanic or an auto mechanic. He was not undertaking any further education courses but said he would go to technical college if he got the right job. He indicated that he needed 'a fair amount more information' about jobs and courses open to him.

Mr and Mrs Stanley have six children. Warren is the second youngest and has two older sisters, two older brothers and one younger brother. Mr and Mrs Stanley reported that Warren's performance at school was 'average' and 'improving' in Grade 10 but that he didn't do very well in Grades 8 and 9. When Warren was in Grade 9, a comment was made on his school report which indicated that he was easily lead. Mrs Stanley said, '...we were astounded, we didn't realise until we read the report'. They went up to the school and talked to the teachers about it.

On another occasion, Mr Stanley spoke to the careers adviser about Warren. The careers adviser said that Warren would do better in a trade. (Fr: Father; Mo: Mother; Int: Interviewer):

Fr	I didn't go up intentionally.
Int	How did it happen?
Fr	Well I work for the Education Department and I know a few teachers. I spend a lot of time at schools looking at furniture. Anyway, in the course of conversation it came out that I was Warren's father and we talked in general about him.
Int	And it was then that he mentioned about Warren doing a trade?
Fr	That's right.

Mr and Mrs Stanley mentioned no problems with regard to their child's school. The following extract illustrates their favourable attitude to the teachers at the school.

Int What do you think of teachers at the school?

Mo Oh, they're all right.

Fr They seem to be a good mob up there - seem interested in the kids.

Mo Could tell if one wasn't - because the children would say.

Int But have they?

Mo No, they're pretty good.

Mr and Mrs Stanley were satisfied with the amount of homework that Warren did. Mr Stanley stated,'We don't pressure him. I don't think you can pressure a kid but I do think you can encourage him.' They thought that Warren would enter some form of a manual trade and that he would leave school after the SC. They said they would encourage and advise Warren but that the final decision about whether he leaves school or not will be up to him.

Mr and Mrs Stanley felt that students lead a sheltered life at school.

Int Well, do you think he knows where he's going?

Mo I don't think he knows, he might have an idea.

Fr He may have a general idea but I think at the age he is now he's just a kid. He can't comprehend what the future is and I don't think any kid can at his age. They come from school where they have had a sheltered life and are suddenly thrown into a whirlwind where if you don't kick the other fellow first he's going to kick you - this is the attitude today.

Int You don't feel Warren is quite sure about where he is going?

Fr I don't think he's sure but whatever he does, he'll cope with it.

Rodney Sparkes, IQ = 110 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Rodney and his parents were born in Australia; Mr Sparkes' occupation is unknown.

> School is not all that bad. Some friends I have say they hate school but if they really did they could of left when

> they turned fifteen. School is getting better and better each year, new techniques of teaching and better fersilities.
>
> [extract]

In the case studies some students commented that school played an important part in teenage development. They said that it helped them to formulate and express views of their own. It was suggested that although some students overtly complain, their support for the value of education is shown by their remaining at school after school-leaving age. However, it is apparent from our case studies throughout the chapter that some of the most critical students were those of high IQ who stayed at school and achieved high accreditation in the HSC. Although prepared to 'use' the institution to gain accreditation, they were critical of its failings. Some felt that schools put order before education, and by excluding students from decision making concerning rules, discouraged the development of self-discipline. There were also complaints that schools promoted conformity rather than the development of individuality. The enforcement of the wearing of school uniforms was seen as a symbol of the more covert conformity fostered by rewarding work which supported the teacher's personal viewpoint.

In general, the analysis of comments from the total student sample reveals that students are supportive of the instrumental value of schooling. A sizable number of students (but by no means the majority) appreciate the fact that school provides the opportunity for education and recognise that education can lead to a better understanding of life, develop independence and provide opportunities for work.

Lesson: Content, Organisation, Assessment

Fourteen per cent of comments concerning lessons, mentioned 'P.E., sport' as good things of school while 2 per cent of the comments referred to too much sport or indicated that compulsory sport was a problem (Table 7). Positive comments were made about specific subjects other than sport, excursions, social events and clubs. Lessons came under attack from some students. They were described as boring, irrelevant, out of date and too difficult. Exams, assignments, and crowded classes were also raised as problems. Some students would have liked to see less time devoted to schooling.

TABLE 7

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GOOD THINGS AND WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL?'

Lesson: content, organisation, assessment

Comments in rank order	NC (a)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Good Things			
P.E., sport	387	14	4
A specific subject other than sport	292	10	3
All, some subjects are interesting	261	9	3
Excursions, social events, clubs	196	7	2
Lessons are useful	84	3	1
Break times	79	3	1
Work load, type of assessment	42	1	..
Free periods	39	1	..
Distribution of periods, length of periods	39	1	..
Sub-total	**1,419**	**(50)**	**(15)**
Problems			
All, some lessons are boring	314	11	3
Assignments too frequent, too much: work, homework	215	8	2
Exams are: unfair, too frequent, cause too much tension	153	5	2
Classes are too crowded	130	5	1
School day too long, school year too long, not enough holidays, break times are too short	132	5	1
Lessons are irrelevant, out of date	129	5	1
Insufficient subject-range, too many compulsory subjects, not enough electives	93	3	1
Too much time wasted by: assembly, changing classrooms, free periods, holidays	66	2	1
Insufficient excursions, social events, clubs	61	2	1
Too much sport, compulsory sport	51	2	1
Lessons are too difficult	46	2	..
Other	43	2	..
Sub-total	**1,433**	**(50)**	**(15)**
TOTAL	**2,852**	**100**	**29**

(a) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does **not** refer to number of students).

Twenty-one per cent of students made positive comments about lessons, organisation and assessment; 13 per cent made negative comments; and 8 per cent made both positive and negative comments (Table 5). No major variations occurred in the distributions of positive and negative attitudes when the sample was cross-tabulated by sex and parents' country of birth.

When the sample was subdivided in terms of parents' country of birth, IQ and SES, it was apparent that a slightly higher proportion of higher IQ students made positive comments about lessons but it was the higher IQ group also that tended to make proportionally more negative comments about lessons (Table 6). Approximately one-fifth (19 per cent) of higher IQ students whose parents were born in NES countries made negative comments about lessons, which is in contrast to the marked support of this group for the instrumental value of schooling. One possible explanation for this result is the high pressure placed on some migrant students by their parents to do well at school. The proportional distribution of positive and negative attitudes did not vary markedly when cross-tabulated by SES.

We also calculated student attitudes to lessons by the grade they left school. Marginally more school stayers (23 per cent) made positive comments about lessons than the leaver 2 group (20 per cent) and the leaver 1 group (15 per cent) but as well a higher proportion of school stayers (15 per cent) made negative comments about lessons in comparison with the leaver 2 group (11 per cent) and the leaver 1 group (11 per cent).

Case studies were developed from responses to the essay topic: 'How does school affect teenagers?' The case studies in this section represent 'problems' rather than 'good things', as students who commented on 'good things' gave a brief answer which they did not further expand, for example, 'lessons are useful'.

Stephanie Loren, IQ = 134 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Stephanie and her parents were born in England; she arrived in Australia aged 8 years; Mr Loren is a department manager in a factory and Mrs Loren is a clerk.

> One side effect from education and the school which affects a majority of teenagers is the volume of homework which drastically curtails the social life. I know myself that you work for hours after school, go to bed, wake up with the prospect of more. A lot of home work is unnecessary. The time wasted in class should be used to better advantage. Weekends, the time for relaxation are little better! I spend nearly all weekend in my room doing homework.
>
> [extract]

Myrna Hrdlicka, IQ = 124 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium HSC results. Myrna was born in Australia and her parents were born in Yugoslavia; Mr Hrdlicka was a chief inspector of engineers and is now retired. They were interviewed in their ethnic language.

> School has many effects on teenagers. It gives them a lot of worries and hard times which could eventually lead to breakdown or in extreme cases it could cause suicide. During the week, every night they have to do homework - not just for one subject but for several. This means that a lot of teenagers are up in the late hours of the night still doing homework. A lot of the time they have to give up their weekends and going out to keep up with the teacher. When exams are coming closer, they have to study nearly all the time, not having hardly any time to their own, personal lives. They worry a lot, start thinking about exams - causing nervous breakdowns etc.
>
> [extract]

In her responses to questionnaires in Grades 9 to 11 Myrna indicated that her aspiration was to be a music teacher. She said that her mother and father would be disappointed if she did not go on to the HSC. When asked about the influence that her father and mother had had on her hopes about education and jobs, Myrna responded:

> My mother and father have helped me a great deal to choose a career because they have been paying for me to play the

> violin for eight years and have influenced me at times when I wanted to stop it.

In response to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', Myrna wrote:

> Some of them are very nice, but they give you too much work e.g. we have to do three long assignments at the same time. A lot of the time, they don't care how the pupils feel or whether they are learning at all.

Mr and Mrs Hrdlicka have three children and Myrna is the youngest. She has an older brother and an older sister. In response to the question, 'How is Myrna getting on at school?', Mr Hrdlicka replied:

> Good, except that she is very sensitive. She gets upset and loses confidence. The children feel that teachers have favourites and that worries her. Migrant children especially suffer from complexes and feelings of inferiority. New Australians can't escape this feeling. Otherwise she gets along with her friends - there is no discrimination.

Myrna's parents were asked, 'What do you think of teachers at the school?'

Fr	They should be closer to the students.
Mo	There are good teachers.
Fr	There is not the same respect for teachers as in my time. Teachers need more tact.
Mo	But then the children are naughty. She had a science teacher who was very witty and they all liked him.

Both parents hope that Myrna will go to the Conservatorium and become a music teacher. They had not sought any information about the course and said that Myrna worries about that. Both parents would like Myrna '...to be what she wants to be'.

Leith Stanley, IQ = 118 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Leith and her parents were born in

77

Australia. Mr Stanley is an engineer.

> Many problems you find in teeangers today come as a direct result of the tensions and pressures of school life. In my opinion, exams, tests and assignments are a increasing worry to teenagers, and can cause in some cases, serious mental and pysicals side effects. The attitude of many parents today are you need a good education in school, if you wish to survive in the outside world. I believe this creates for children, a sense of having to have this education, no matter what extremes are taken to obtain it. There appears an increasing amount of competition between students and the sense of failure or success can produce in a child's character a feeling of inferioty or superiority. But apart from exam jitters these - the personal effects some school teenagers can be narsty to the other children, merely for the fact that they don't look as clean as they should be, or they aren't very good at school or they have a personality defect which leaves them few friends. There is always the bully in a school, but today in my school I think there are more tough and bitchy girls, than there should be. Other more conservitive girls have to humble themselves in order to get along in school without the worry of attacks by others. The situation is heading where school children are becoming uncontrollable, due to lack of discipline at home or the need to change their character in order to make friends. Therefore I think school has a bad effect on teenagers due to increasing pressure from schoolwork and the behavior of many students.
>
> [extract]

Robert Mazzio, IQ = 98 (low); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Robert was born in Australia and his parents were born in Malta; Mr Mazzio is an electrical engineer. The parents were interviewed in English.

> I think school affects teenagers in many ways such as knowledge. You learn about things going on around you in life such as sex as in First Form we learnt sex and it was very interesting as some people did not know about it. It helps us to make friends and enemies such as teachers and Principals. It helps us to show our views about things and our ability in sports and games.
>
> [extract]

Robert aspired to be a motor mechanic in Grade 10. He said that his mother would be disappointed if he did not go on to the HSC but his father would not be disappointed. When asked to comment on the influence that his mother and father had had on his hopes about education and jobs Robert responded: 'They have not influenced me very much.' He said that teachers at his school were 'not bad'.

Robert said he left high school 'because it would have been much harder to get a job and 6th form results wouldn't have been much better'. He responded, 'slightly no' to the question, 'Would you have liked to stay longer at secondary school?' At the time of his response to the leavers' questionnaire Robert had a job as a labourer at the abattoir. He was not attending any educational course. He indicated that he still hoped to be a motor mechanic in the long run and go to a technical college as an apprentice. He said that he needed 'a little more' information about jobs and courses open to him.

Robert has one older brother. When Mr and Mrs Mazzio were asked, 'How is Robert getting on at school?', they responded as follows:

Mo Oh, he is quite good. He is getting on all right.

Fr He has picked up.

Mo He has improved a bit.

Fr ...when I told him to carry on to fifth and sixth form if he wants to go into an office job, he says, 'No, I don't want to get an office job.' He says he wants to be a motor mechanic and doesn't want to go to fifth and sixth form.

Mr and Mrs Mazzio took Robert up to the school to see a vocational guidance officer and Mrs Mazzio indicated that teachers '...are all right, they are nice when we talk to a few of them', and '...it is a good school'. Mr and Mrs Mazzio expect that Robert will enter some sort of manual work. They will leave the final choice to Robert. Mr Mazzio commented, 'It is no good forcing him into an office job if he doesn't want it.'

From the case studies it appears that, for the conscientious student, homework, assignments and exams can cause tension, and in some cases the pressure from excessive homework load may interfere with the development of peer relationships. Students frequently complain about a lack of co-operation among teachers in different subject areas concerning the spacing of the assignment load. Increasing competition may also add to the fear of failure, which may seriously impede the development of a satisfactory sense of identity - one of the important developmental tasks in adolescent years.

From the analysis of comments from the total sample we can conclude that the content, organisation and assessment of lessons come under more scrutiny (when both positive and negative statements are considered) than any other single issue. Students' thoughts are equally divided in terms of 'good things' and 'problems' mentioned. Positive comments are directed towards specific subjects which students find interesting. P.E. features strongly among this group. On the negative side: lessons are described as being boring, irrelevant and out of date; assignments and exams are described as being too frequent and unfair; and claims are made that classes are overcrowded.

Peers, Peer Relationships

Student responses clearly demonstrate that school is a good place to be with friends (Table 8). There were 715 comments which drew attention to this aspect. These comments reflect 7 per cent of all comments made, which is the highest proportion for any single category. Students also see the school as a place where they can help one another and learn to mix with the opposite sex. But peers can also have a negative influence. There is evidence (86 comments) that some students interfere with those who wish to work and other comments refer to bullying.

Twenty-eight per cent of students made positive comments about peers and peer relationships, 11 per cent made negative comments, while 6 per cent made both positive and negative comments (Table 5). A higher proportion of girls (53 per cent) mentioned peers in their response in comparison with boys (36 per cent). Overall, proportionally more girls made positive comments about peer relationships than boys, and the student group with Australian-born parents made more positive comments than each of the three groups of students with at least one parent born overseas.

When the sample is subdivided in terms of parents' country of birth,

TABLE 8

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GOOD THINGS AND WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL?'

Peers, peer relationships

Comments in rank order	NC	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Good Things			
School is a place to be with friends	715	50	7
School provides the opportunity to help one another	133	9	1
School provides the opportunity to learn to mix with the opposite sex	91	6	1
Other (b)	12	1	..
Sub-total	951	(67)	(10)
Problems			
Insufficient opportunity provided to mix with the opposite sex	164	12	2
The bad influence of friends on: self, others	133	9	1
The interference of some on those who wish to work	86	6	1
The lack of consideration of some for others, the bullying, intolerance among different age groups	64	5	1
Other (b)	18	1	..
Sub-total	465	(33)	(5)
TOTAL	1,416	100	15

(a) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does **not refer** to number of students).

(b) There were 12 comments indicating that 'school provides the opportunity to make friends with different ethnic groups' while 18 comments referred to 'migrant students' as problems.

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IQ and SES we find that a higher percentage of higher IQ students made positive comments about peers than the lower IQ group (Table 9). However, it is the higher IQ group also that marginally made more negative comments about peers. The attitude distributions are not influenced by the SES variable.

Case studies were developed from responses to the essay topic; 'How does school affect teenagers?'

Thomas Stevens, IQ = 117; did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: medium SC results and left school. Thomas and his parents were born in Australia; Mr Stevens' occupation was not given.

> School helps you to mix with people, make new friends and introduces new interests. School increase a persons knowledge, gives them a broader outlook on life and prepares them for the adult life to come by imposing heavy responsibilities. I think overall the most important thing about school is the friends you make and see almost every day and these friends are for life. Also school attempts to educate not only English, Maths etc., but common sense which you can see lacking in many people. School also attempts to teach students to be obedient but the methods are very unsuccessful.
>
> [extract]

Doreen Brady, IQ = 119 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Doreen and her parents were born in Canada, she arrived in Australia aged 12. Mr Brady is the manager of a bottle shop.

> Belonging to an all girls school and having gone to a co-ed school in the U.S.A. I have noticed many difficulties in this area. Separated schools create many problems between teenagers. They become less confident when confronted with the opposite sex and more likely to have serious damage caused by rejection. I feel that separate schools encourage what they set out to discourage when a person is banned from doing something that they do not know much about in the first place, they are more likely to satisfy their ever growing curiosity.
>
> [extract]

TABLE 9

STUDENT ATTITUDES AS SHOWN IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GOOD THINGS AND WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL?'

Peers, rules by IQ by socio-economic status

(N = 2,412)(a)

Linguistic and quantitative IQ (ML & MQ)	Socio-economic status	Percentage distribution:																			
		Parents' Country of Birth																			
		Both Australian				Both non-English-speaking countries				Another or different English-speaking countries				One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country				Total			
		Peers(a)		Rules		Peers		Rules		Peers		Rules		Peers		Rules		Peers		Rules	
		Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.
Higher (107–135)	Higher (ANU status categories 1–8)	32	12	..	27	30	14	..	23	26	14	..	21	43	..	..	30	31	12	1	25
	Lower (ANU status categories 9–16)	38	14	..	24	32	12	..	21	27	12	..	21	..	..	..	..	34	13	1	23
Lower (70–106)	Higher	26	12	..	17	19	16	..	10	24	11	..	15	..	..	..	..	25	12	..	15
	Lower	24	8	..	16	20	10	..	14	23	5	5	18	26	..	..	16	23	8	1	16
Total Higher IQ		35	13	1	25	31	13	..	21	27	13	..	21	27	8	..	21	33	12	1	24
Total Lower IQ		25	9	..	16	20	11	..	13	23	7	4	17	23	..	..	14	23	9	1	15
	Total Higher SES	30	12	1	23	25	14	..	17	26	13	..	19	35	..	..	23	29	12	1	22
	Total Lower SES	32	11	1	21	24	11	..	16	25	9	2	20	20	..	..	15	28	9	1	19
GRAND TOTAL		31	11	1	22	24	12	..	16	25	11	2	20	26	6	..	18	29	11	1	20

(a) Percentages are based on a sample of 2,412, as some students did not answer this question. The distribution of the total sample 2,740 can be obtained from Table 1, Ap.A. There were 228 students for whom SES was not known.

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Nicola Pappadopoulis, IQ = 104 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school. Nicola was born in Australia and her parents were born in Cyprus; her father is a cleaner and a taxi-driver, and her mother works in a factory.

> Teenagers at school are learning bad language and rude things and also wrong things about sex from their silly freinds and they go home and their mother will ask 'Where did you learn those vulgar things from', you you'se to have been a little angel now look at you, dirty, torn uniform, speaking like a devil. What is this school doing to you'.
>
> [extract]

Coralie Princeton, IQ = 130 (high); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: high SC and left school. (She said she left school because she was not interested in school work any more and is happily employed in a bank.) She and her parents were born in Australia; Mr Princeton is the managing director of a company.

> High school has the main affect on the teenagers of today. These affects are not usually good ones but introduce the pupils to various things such as drugs, smoking, drinking etc.
>
> At this age children can be easily coaxed into trying drugs for example, because if their friends do it then they feel that they would be left out of everything if they didn't smoke grass, hash or pot.
>
> Many parties of today are not a good one unless smoking and drinking is allowed. The schools have an effect because friends are made at school and thus the parties are frequent and all the friends get together.
>
> Schools often turn teenagers to drugs and smoking because many of the teenagers feel that this is a way to get the teachers back for their cruelty during the day. The pupils feel that smoking behind the teachers back they are getting them back.
>
> Some teenagers feel a sense of power or greatness if the smoke in the school bus or in the toilets at recess and lunchtimes when the teachers cannot see them.
>
> If a teacher 'picks' on a certain pupil the pupil feels aggressiveness and anger towards the teacher and often goes home and takes it out on either their parent or brothers and sisters. This can cause a conflict at home.

> School takes up a great deal of a teenagers lifetime. Such time is spent not only at school itself but studying and homework takes up time which leaves the teenagers with little or no leisure time to be spent with friends.
>
> This is how I feel school affects teenagers.
>
> [complete essay]

Students spoke positively of the fact that school provides an opportunity to be with friends, to work co-operatively and to learn to mix with members of the opposite sex. However, students in single sex schools were most critical of the lack of opportunities provided in these schools to mix with the opposite sex. They felt that such unnatural separation may undermine the student's confidence in the presence of the opposite sex, and this may lead to either shyness or exhibitionism. Students also drew attention to negative aspects of peer interactions such as interference during lessons, lack of consideration and bullying. Some also mentioned the bad influence of their peers with respect to such things as swearing, smoking and drugs.

Rules, Discipline

There were few positive comments about rules and discipline (Table 10). Most negative comments were along the lines that discipline is too strict, and there are too many unwarranted restrictions. A number of comments were critical of too much punishment and caning but, surprisingly, a number of students would like to see more caning and punishment.

Twenty per cent of students displayed negative attitudes to rules and 1 per cent made positive attitude statements (Table 5). Girls tended to make more negative attitude statements than boys concerning rules and discipline, and a lower proportion of the student group with NES parents made negative attitude statements in comparison with each of the remaining three groups defined by the parents' country of birth classification. Table 9 reveals that it is the higher IQ, higher SES students (25 per cent overall) who tended to make negative attitude statements about school rules.

Case studies were developed from responses to the essay topic, 'How does school affect teenagers?'

TABLE 10

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GOOD THINGS AND WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL?'

Rules, discipline

Comments in rank order	NC (a)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Good Things			
Rules, discipline (are good)	36	5	..
Sub-total	36	(5)	..
Problems			
Discipline is too strict	184	26	2
Specific rules are problems, e.g. rules regarding: eating in class, wearing of jewellery, use of toilets and showers, lunch time, 'lining up'	142	20	1
Too many rules	85	12	1
Rules are generally: bad, stupid	77	11	1
Too much: punishment, punishment of all because of some, detention	79	11	1
Too much caning	62	9	1
Insufficient: caning, punishment	32	5	..
Sub-total	661	(95)	(7)
TOTAL	697	100	7

(a) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does **not** refer to number of students).

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Victoria Stoddart, IQ = 120 (high); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: high SC and left school. Victoria and her parents were born in Australia; Mr Stoddart is a shop assistant.

> I think there are too many rules. In our school you must have a note to go to the toilet. Rules like this make students rebell against teachers and cause a distrust between them.

[extract]

Sarah Rainsworth, IQ = 131 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC results. Sarah and her parents were born in Australia; Mr Rainsworth is a sales representative and Mrs Rainsworth is a part-time clerk.

> School is like a prison to most teenagers. They know they have to go to school, but are always thinking how much they would like to leave. When kids are finally old enough to leave, their parents may force them to stay, or they realize that they need to stay at school to get a good job later on. They will spend the next few years hating every minute of work and making a nuisance of themselves because they are bored.
>
> School makes teenagers rebel. Some schools have silly rules which the students are supposed to obey without question. These rules are said to be for the pupils' own benefit, but no one ever explains how or why. So, the kids break these rules for kicks. Kids also break school uniform rules because of the monotony of wearing the same clothes five days a week, for about forty weeks a year.
>
> Separate boys and girls schools make a lot of girls go wild every time they see a guy. I think teenagers would act in a much more mature manner if they were in co-ed schools and classes through all stages of their schooling. Separated schools can cause kids to be shy of the opposite sex, and perhaps they will never come out of their shell.
>
> If subjects at schools were made more interesting and teachers had more control over the 'wilder' kids, schools would be of more benefit to teenagers, teaching them maturity, consideration of others and something about the outside world.

[extract]

Natasha Rachmanov, IQ = 104 (medium); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school. Natasha was born in Australia and her parents were born in Russia; Mr Rachmanov is a plumber.

> School is too much like a 'prison camp', with the way you have to dress, too many rules to obey, jumping to what teacher says and learning a lot of rubbish in class, which will not be of any use to the pupil when he or she leaves school. I also think that 4th formers should be able to smoke, since most of them are allowed to smoke at home and most of the teachers smoke in the classroom. 4th formers should be able to choose what subjects they would like to do and the school should have courses at school such as typing etc. The schools are also mainly run by old fashioned rules and laws which are out-of-date. I think pupils have the right to express themselves more in what they believe can make school a better place to learn.
>
> [extract]

In Grade 9, Natasha aspired to be a receptionist and in Grade 10 she said that she hoped to work in a bank. She indicated that her parents would be disappointed if she left school before the HSC. In response to the question referring to the influence that her father and mother had had on her hopes about education and jobs, Natasha wrote, 'My mother and father want the best for me and my future and want me to get a job that I would like.'

In Grade 9, Natasha wrote the following in response to the question about good things and problems of school:

> I think the teachers are too strict and bad-tempered, have favourites in the classroom, give too much homework, separate you from your friends, they don't let you smoke, swear or eat in class. There are no good points, about school.

A year later in response to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', she wrote:

> I find teachers at our school very unfair, too favourable to one particular person, ignorant of other opinions, bad tempered, unjustly, naggers, slave drivers, old-fashioned and make classwork drag and uninteresting.

Natasha said she left school, 'because I got my SC and did not want to go any further'. When asked whether she would have liked to stay longer at secondary school, she responded 'definitely no'. At the time of response to the leavers'questionnaire, Natasha was a junior chemist assistant. She was not attempting any further studies and would like 'a little more' information on jobs and courses that were open to her.

Mr and Mrs Rachmanov have three children and Natasha is the youngest. When her parents were asked, 'How is Natasha getting on at school?', they responded as follows:

Mo I wouldn't say that she likes it very much - just average attitude.

Int What about her work? How do you feel about her work?

Mo Average, not very keen on learning.

In answer to the question, 'What do you think of teachers at the school?' Mrs Rachmanov replied:

> I have no complaints about the teachers. I think teachers do their jobs because they have been taught to teach children to do everything they know. I never have anything against teachers not in public or high school.

Mr and Mrs Rachmanov would like Natasha to enter a banking job but indicated that the final decision about leaving school or not will be up to Natasha.

Mo ...she has made her decision, she doesn't like to go any further and you can't force her to do it. In my opinion forcing them to learn is not very good because she would just waste her time. It would be better for her to go to learn at a job she likes now - I think that would be best.

To sum up, rules in schools are criticised by a number of students as being too numerous and generally bad or stupid. As the students take no part in the formulation of the rules, they feel no responsibility for seeing that they are kept. It appears that when students see rules as stupid or excessively repressive there are some who break them just 'for kicks'. The research into reasons for early school leaving reviewed earlier in this chapter reveals that many school leavers are 'turned off' by school rules. In the light of these results our finding that the higher IQ/higher SES students made proportionally more negative comments about school rules is of considerable interest. It is possible that the organisation of schools in terms of rules and regulations is more in tune with the culture of the children with lower SES backgrounds.

In a review of recent literature on differences in child rearing practices among parents from different socio-economic backgrounds, Watts (1978) concluded that as working class parents are themselves used to accepting direction, they expect their own children to conform to external rules and show respect to adults who are in a position of authority. On the other hand, middle class parents are more likely to hold positions wherein they are required to show self-direction, and they are therefore more likely to encourage self-reliance and initiative in their own children.

The behaviour patterns postulated by Watts are certainly evident in our data to a moderate degree. Our case studies illustrate these trends. For example:

Mark Planter: (see page 127). Mark, whose father is a fitter and turner, commented that '[school] teaches them disciplin so that when you get a job you will know how to take orders!'

Janet Jones: (see page 129). Janet, whose father is a foreman in the Main Roads Department, stated that:

> school is where most teenagers have to come to terms with themselves and the adults who they have to show respect. Most teenagers are shown in schools that they have to, like it or not realise that they must bear under to their supervisors, namely teachers, and take orders, do messages and

to be able to get on aggreeably in high school.

Victor Peterson: (see page 139). Victor, whose father is a police medical officer, commented that school is:

> supposed to teach them self discipline and responsibility and yet in many cases kids leave school in 5th or 6th form still unable to show initiative. This is partly the fault of classes where they are told exactly the way to do something instead of having the challenge of finding out for themselves.

Marco Kerner: (see page 138). Marco, whose father is an industrial chemist said in reference to schools that:

> you are taught to think alike, which takes away peoples individuality. Schools should promote individuality and not try to make everyone the same. The pupils of the school who do not want their individuality taken away from them are labeled as troublemakers, rebels etc.

Mark and Janet both have higher IQs and come from lower SES backgrounds. Victor has a higher IQ and Marco a lower IQ. Both Victor and Marco have upper SES backgrounds and in their responses to schooling seem to be expressing opinions based on the middle class style of family upbringing outlined by Watts above; whereas Mark's and Janet's comments are more akin to the working class family style of upbringing.

When data from the parents' survey were analysed, it seemed evident that most parents, irrespective of social class, allowed their children more autonomy than they were permitted at school. Eighty per cent of all parents interviewed said that,in making the final decision concerning their child's future education and job, the student's own opinion would be the most important consideration. A further 8 per cent felt that the decision should be made jointly by the parents and the student. The only notable exception to this was the Lebanese ethnic group. Thirty-seven per cent of Lebanese parents felt that either one or both parents should make the decision irrespective of the student's own opinion. However, approximately 60 per cent indicated that they would evaluate the suitability of a job on the basis of the student's own wishes or abilities. Ethnic differences in parental attitudes will be discussed in more detail in Report No. 3.

Discussion of Results - Teachers

Two analyses of students' perceptions of teachers were undertaken. There were 1861 comments made about teachers in response to the question about good things and problems of school (Table 11) - and over 80 per cent of these comments were negative. In Grade 10 students were asked to respond to the question: 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school.'

This question contrasts with the earlier question asked in Grade 9 in that we attempted to make this question as neutral as possible, whereas the earlier question drew attention to 'good things' and 'problems' of schooling. In this way we hoped to get an objective overview of the attitudes held by the student group. As well as asking the question of students in the sample who were at school, we also followed up, via mail questionnaire and interview (if necessary to obtain a reply), those students in the sample who had already left school. In response to the question on teachers, most students commented on personal and professional qualities of teachers. Fifty-three per cent of the comments made were negative (Table 12). Most students were unwilling to lump all teachers under the one comment, positive or negative. Therefore, in our coding we distinguished between 'some or individual teachers', and 'all or most teachers'. In the 'all or most' category the majority of comments made were positive in contrast to the 'some or individual' category where the majority of comments made were negative.

Even a quick perusal of the positive dimensions of Tables 11 and 13 leaves the reader in no doubt that many teachers are perceived by students as doing an outstanding job. A sizable number of comments (1919) described teachers by the use of such adjectives as understanding, helpful, friendly, genuine, reliable and trustworthy. Other qualities mentioned in relation to teachers are: trusting, fair, well-liked, intelligent, interesting, informative, conscientious, effective, experienced and encouraging.

However, students have a lot to say about negative aspects of teachers too. In the question on 'good things' and 'problems' where there was no focus on teachers as such, among those who commented on teachers, there was a high proportion who displayed negative attitudes to teachers (Table 11).

TABLE 11

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GOOD THINGS AND WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL?'

Teachers and their personal, professional qualities

Comments in rank order	NC (a)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Good Things			
Friendly, understanding, helpful, reliable teachers	119	6	1
Some teachers (are 'good things')	107	6	1
All or most teachers (are 'good things')	85	5	1
Other	25	1	..
Sub-total	**336**	**(18)**	**(3)**
Problems			
Authoritarian teachers	243	13	3
Inconsiderate teachers	232	12	2
Most teachers (are problems)	229	12	2
Some, individual teachers (are problems)	189	10	2
Teachers with poor personalities	187	10	2
Teacher who teach poorly	137	7	1
Unfair teachers	114	6	1
Lazy, uninterested teachers	86	5	1
Teachers who are not strict enough	68	4	1
Other (b)	40	2	..
Sub-total	**1,525**	**(82)**	**(16)**
TOTAL	1,861	100	19

(a) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does **not** refer to number of students).

(b) There were 20 comments indicating that teachers from overseas, with foreign accents, were problems.

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TABLE 12

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WRITE A FEW LINES ABOUT HOW YOU FIND TEACHERS AT YOUR SCHOOL'

Summary

Category under discussion			Positive (a)		Negative	
	NC (b)	% of grand total of all comments in all areas	NC	% of grand total of all comments in all areas	NC	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
The personal, professional qualities of all or most teachers (c)	3,722	40	2,293	25	1,429	16
The personal, professional qualities of some teachers or individual teachers	4,542	49	1,644	18	2,898	32
Suggestions for improvement in teachers (d)	507	5	..	..	507	5
Statements expressing preferences according to age, sex of teacher (e)	166	2	67	1	99	1
TOTAL	8,937(f)	96	4,004	43	4,933	53

(a) Four of the categories were sub-divided into positive and negative comments. The category 'Suggestions for improvements in teachers' was placed on the negative side of the table. 'General comments' are not shown on this table as they were largely neutral in nature.

(b) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

(c) Categories of comments relating to 'The personal, professional qualities of all or most teachers, some teachers and individual teachers' are grouped together in Table 13.

(d) No table provided for this category.

(e) No table provided for this category.

(f) Together with 'General comments', there were 9,264 valid comments offered by 2,722 students, i.e. if a particular student made three comments these were recorded opposite the relevant category. 'General comments' totalled 327 (4%).

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TABLE 13

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WRITE A FEW LINES ABOUT HOW YOU FIND TEACHERS AT YOUR SCHOOL'

The personal, professional qualities of: all or most, some or individual teachers

Comments	Total			All or most			Some or individual		
	NC(a)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of comments in all areas	NC	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of comments in all areas	NC	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of comments in all areas
Positive									
Teachers are:									
Understanding, helpful, friendly, genuine, reliable, trustworthy	1,919	23	21	1,147	14	12	772	9	8
Good, very good	1,294	16	14	710	9	8	584	7	6
Trusting, fair	273	3	3	175	2	2	98	1	1
Well liked	175	2	2	116	1	1	59	1	1
Intelligent, interesting, informative	153	2	2	74	1	1	79	1	1
Conscientious, effective, experienced	67	1	1	41	..	..	26	..	..
Encouraging	56	1	1	30	..	..	26	..	..
Sub-total	3,937	(48)	(42)	2,293	(28)	(25)	1,644	(19)	(17)
Negative									
Teachers are:									
(Actively, overtly) unfriendly, unkind, over-authoritarian, irritable	800	10	9	239	3	3	561	7	6
Apathetic about: jobs, helping students with their work, future	740	9	8	287	3	3	453	5	5
Hated, despised, annoying to students	675	8	7	195	2	2	480	6	5
Unfair, discriminative, prejudiced toward certain students	436	5	5	127	2	1	309	4	3
Bad	397	5	4	65	1	1	332	4	4
Unable to relate owing to: conceit, aloofness, lack of respect for students	382	5	4	151	2	2	231	3	2
Unable to: prepare, present: lessons well, interestingly	296	4	3	101	1	1	195	2	2
Unable to set realistic: work-load, assessment	161	2	2	84	1	1	77	1	1
Narrow, old-fashioned	147	2	2	69	1	1	78	1	1
Unable to control classes	131	2	1	37	..	..	94	1	1
Inconsistent, allow personal problems to affect their behaviour	117	1	1	68	1	1	49	1	1
Difficult to understand through: accent, vocabulary	45	1	..	6	..	..	39	..	..
Sub-total	4,327	(52)	(47)	1,429	(17)	(15)	2,898	(35)	(32)
TOTAL	8,264	100	89	3,722	45	40	4,542	55	49

(a) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

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Students are opposed to teachers who are over-authoritarian, aloof, unfriendly, inconsiderate, discriminative, prejudiced, conceited and unkind, and who show a lack of respect for students (Tables 11 and 13). Students also want teachers to be able to control classes. Several comments indicate that students are not very tolerant towards migrant teachers, particularly if they have an accent.

We developed two definitions of attitudes towards teachers (Table 14). In definition 1, students who made only positive comments were classified as positive. Similarly, students who made only negative comments were classified as negative. In definition 2, students who made mainly positive statements were added to the only positive attitude statement group. Similarly, students who made mainly negative comments were added to the only negative category. Even for the definition 2 classification, there were half the students who made both positive and negative statements. In the light of preliminary analyses we decided to use definition 1 in the analyses which follow.

Approximately two-thirds of students made both positive and negative statements about teachers, while one-sixth of the students made only positive statements and one-sixth made only negative statements (Table 15). No major variations in the proportion of positive and negative attitude statements occur when the sample is subdivided by sex. Proportionally more students with a NES background made positive attitude statements about teachers and fewer made negative attitude statements than the remaining three groups, but overall variations are small.

When the sample was cross-tabulated in terms of parents' country of birth, IQ and SES, we found that the lower IQ, lower SES, groups tended to proportionally make more positive comments about teachers (Table 16). The lower IQ, lower SES, groups also made proportionally more negative comments in comparison with the higher IQ, higher SES groups. Overall, more students in the higher IQ group tended to rate teachers both positively and negatively (70 per cent) in comparison with the lower IQ group (58 per cent).

TABLE 14

STUDENT ATTITUDES SHOWN TOWARDS TEACHERS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WRITE A FEW LINES ABOUT HOW YOU FIND TEACHERS AT YOUR SCHOOL'

A frequency count of attitudes of responses

Attitudinal variable definition 1 (a)	N	%
Attitudinal Variable Definition 1(a)		
Only positive	469	17
Only negative	436	16
Positive and negative	1,757	65
Neutral and/or irrelevant	60	2
TOTAL	2,722	100
Attitudinal Variable Definition 2(b)		
Mainly positive	580	21
Mainly negative	728	26
Positive and negative	1,354	50
Neutral and/or irrelevant	60	2
TOTAL	2,722	100

(a) In definition 1 only positive statements alone were coded positive and only negative statements alone were coded negative.

(b) The additional variable definition 2 was defined according to the formula: if the number of negative responses is less than the integer value of ½ (the number of positive responses +1), the category is defined as 'mainly positive'; if the number of positive responses is less than the integer value of ½ (the number of negative responses +1) the category is defined as 'mainly negative'; the 'positive and negative' category consist of remaining combinations of positive and negative responses.

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TABLE 15

STUDENT ATITUDES SHOWN TOWARDS TEACHERS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WRITE A FEW LINES ABOUT HOW YOU FIND TEACHERS AT YOUR SCHOOL'

Sample description	Positive (a)		Negative		Positive & negative		Neutral or irrelevant	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total Sample (b)	469	17	436	16	1,757	65	60	2
Sex: Male	247	19	203	16	786	61	47	4
Female	222	15	233	16	971	68	13	1
Parents' Country of Birth:								
Both Australian	231	15	251	17	1,012	66	30	2
Both non-English-speaking countries	125	21	81	14	365	63	12	2
Another or different English-speaking countries	88	20	66	15	279	63	10	2
One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	16	14	29	26	62	55	5	5

(a) See Table 14 for definition of attitude (definition 1).

(b) Cell frequencies for total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by Parents' Country of Birth, due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

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TABLE 16

STUDENT ATTITUDES SHOWN TOWARDS TEACHERS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WRITE A FEW LINES ABOUT HOW YOU FIND TEACHERS AT YOUR SCHOOL'

By IQ by socio-economic status and by parents' country of birth (four-way classification)
(N = 2,468)(a)

Linguistic and quantitative IQ (ML & MQ)	Socio-economic status	Both Australian			Both non-English speaking countries			Another or different English speaking countries			One parent English speaking other non-English speaking country			Total		
		Pos. %	Neg. %	Pos. & neg. %	Pos. %	Neg. %	Pos. & neg. %	Pos. %	Neg. %	Pos. & neg. %	Pos. %	Neg. %	Pos. & neg. %	Pos. %	Neg. %	Pos. & neg. %
Higher (107-135)	Higher (ANU status categories 1-8)	12	16	70(b)	19	12	68	18	11	68	..(c)	22	69	14	15	69
	Lower (ANU status categories 9-16)	13	13	73	12	12	74	22	15	62	14	28	59	15	14	70
Lower (70-106)	Higher	14	21	63	20	14	66	18	15	66	..	39	54	16	19	64
	Lower	20	18	59	27	16	55	21	21	56	24	27	39	23	18	56
Total Higher IQ		13	14	71	14	12	72	20	13	65	10	25	64	14	14	70
Total Lower IQ		18	19	61	26	15	57	20	19	59	20	30	43	21	18	58
	Total Higher SES	13	18	68	20	13	67	18	12	67	..	27	64	14	17	67
	Total Lower SES	16	15	67	22	15	61	21	18	59	19	27	49	19	16	63
GRAND TOTAL (d)		15	16	67	22	14	62	20	16	62	14	27	56	17	16	65

(a) Percentages are based on a sample of 2,468, as some students did not answer this question. The distribution of the total sample of 2,740 can be obtained from Table 1 Ap.A. There were 254 students for whom SES was not known.

(b) As a few students made only comments which were classified as showing a neutral attitude towards teachers, and others made irrelevant comments, the sum of the percentages shown is less than 100%.

(c) Where cell frequencies are less than five, no percentages are shown.

(d) Cell frequencies for the total sample are slightly higher than the totals on this table, due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

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We also calculated student attitudes to teachers by the grade at which they left school. A higher proportion of school stayers (69 per cent) made both positive and negative attitude statements compared with leavers 2 (64 per cent) and leavers 1 (40 per cent). The leavers 1 group contained the largest proportion who made only positive comments (28 per cent), in comparison with 16 per cent from leavers 2 and 17 per cent from school stayers, and also the highest proportion who made only negative comments (27 per cent), in comparison with 18 per cent for leavers 2 and 12 per cent for school stayers. In particular we found that one-third of the higher IQ leavers 1 students made only negative comments about teachers.

Case studies were developed from responses to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school'.

Jane Bishop, IQ = 123 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Jane and her parents were born in Australia; Mr Bishop is a chief draughtsman.

> Teachers at my school are disheartening. Half of them are excellent. The other half are appalling. The ones that are excellent don't need to have much to be written about them so I'll leave them to last.
>
> The appalling half of my teachers are, in my opinion, concerned only in the acceptance of that nice big pay packet at the end of each week and the excessive holidays. The teaching part is a mere secondory consideration. Much improvement is need. Lessons conducted by these teachers are boring, unvaried and slow. The pupils enthusiasm is cruelled by the teachers' lack of it. The subject is only as interesting as the teachers and students make it.
>
> When inspectors inform the school of their future arrival, the teachers suddenly give us work, get things up to date and seem well organized by the time the Inspectors have arrived. Overall the students learn little. These teachers don't have planned schedules or predetermined work. They set it on the spur of the moment.
>
> Some teachers don't care whether the student learns and understands or not. If a complaint is made we are told, usually, that we are biased against teachers or object to discipline.
>
> Discipline, to a certain extent, is necessary. But that is no reason for it to be unjust. Happy workers are good workers. With the assessment system a teacher may give

> the pupil a bad assessment because of personal prejudice etc.
>
> Migrant teachers whom can't speak English are to be ridiculed!
>
> The good teachers are excellent. They make learning a pleasure. Their lessons are varied, interesting and full. Between pupils and these teachers exist a mutual interest and respect. Therefore more work is done and at a higher standard. More is learnt. The teachers are conscientious and concerned, therefore they are helpful. They treat the pupils as adults and they then (the pupils) work as adults.
>
> Overall, I feel that the education system has a lot to be improved in the direction of the teachers.

Mary Grimes, IQ = 133 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high SC and left school. Mary and her parents were born in Australia; Mr Grimes works on the railways and Mrs Grimes is a hospital worker.

> Always ready to hear our opinions. Willing to help with problems (both school & private). Almost always unbiased & fair good at teaching (mostly) Always try to make lessons bearable. The standards set are fair to everyone you are not expected to attempt anything out of your capability.

Jane Cooper, IQ = 125 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium HSC results. Jane and her parents were born in Australia; Mr Cooper is a sheet metal worker.

> I don't think teachers can all be put in the same catigory. Some are frientlly, these are the ones I like and usually and do best in that subject, but a lot are selfish not for them self but for their subject. They all give homework at the same time, and expect it in at the same time these are the nights you are up untill 12 am doing homework. They dont co-ordinate their programmes. Then there are those who don't know what they are teaching and would be lost without a textbook

Jennifer Jones, IQ = 125 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Jennifer was born in Singapore and arrived in Australia aged 10 years; Mr Jones, who is not alive, was born in Australia and Mrs Jones was born in Malaysia; Mrs Jones is a super-market cashier.

> I find that a few of my teachers are really conscientous about their work and are interested in us. They always stress to us that we must do our best. However there are a great number of teachers that do not care about us at all. They only teach because it is their occupation and they have to. They are very lazy and some teachers have told us that they hate teaching us. There are a few teachers now who are not giving us much work now because it is nearly the end of term but mainly because they cannot be bothered. Quite a few teachers have their pets and also they have kids whom they love to pick on. There are some teachers who love to put down someone in front of their classmates. If this person gets a low mark, the teacher purposely tells the rest of the class this mark. There is one teacher who hardly ever turns up for class and when she does, she gets one of the other girls to read out notes to the rest of the class, while she disappears somewhere.

Susan Smythe, IQ = 97 (low); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Susan and her parents were born in Australia; Mr Smythe is a panelbeater and Mrs Smythe is a kitchen hand.

> Some teachers can be all right sometimes but other times teachers can be bad. If they are angry about something which doesn't have anything to do with the pupils, the pupils are the first ones to get blamed. We get into trouble for being cheaky but they can be just as rude themselves. The teachers always beleive other teachers about things and they never give the pupils a chance to say anything. They are so stick-up. We get treated as though we are prisoners in a bloody prison camp. School uniforms shouldn't be worn as it is not compulsory. If you get busted for smoking they ring up your parents put you on detention and chuck big hastles. I will be glad when I leave the school and I bet a lot of other kids would to. They give you the shits.

Jill Davis, IQ = 129 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high SC and left school. Jill and her parents were born in England; Jill arrived in Australia aged 10 years. Mr Davis is a clerk and Mrs Davis a shop assistant.

> Generally I like most of my teachers at school. Most of them are co-operative and helpful. The majority of my teachers have a sense of humour and can take a joke. A few of them bore me sometimes. the thing that bores me the most is when

> a teacher spends period after period just talking to the class. I also dislike it when teachers mumble and do not talk out to the class then they tell you off for not listening. Some teachers are too hard on pupils. One of my teachers continually picks on certain pupils in the class and never tells anybody else off when they misbehave. I think this unfair.
>
> I get on well with most of my teachers but I often get into trouble or have a disagreement with them. I hate it when teachers think they own you and yell at you like they were your parents. I also hate it when teachers make a fool of you in one way or another when you are infront of your classmates.

Sue O'Connor, IQ = 100 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Sue and her mother were born in Australia; Mr O'Connor was born in England; he is a ship's engineer.

> Teachers at our school are hypocrits. They tell you to stop talking about what happened over the week-end or what ever it is you happen to be talking about. then they go over to a group of girls telling them how the woman at the shop didn't know how to measure materials for curtains. And it need not necessarily be a needlework or maths lesson. It happens in all different subjects and it usually hasn't a thing to do with what we are learning.
>
> Some teachers can't controll a noisey class, some don't help you if you don't know what to do or if you can't do something. I hate it when there is a teachers pet. And I think it is unfair when a teacher has just had a destructive class and is in a bad mood, then they take it all out on the next class when they haven't even had a chance to walk in the room.
>
> We have some really good teachers who care about their class but most of them are raving lunatics who give you a whole lot of Bull crap to write in your books then they expect you to understand it and remember it. Half of the teachers just come to school to be big bosses so we have to look up to them then they wonder why we dislike them so much. They say we hurt their feelings when we say our piece to them. But the don't think that WE might have feelings too!

Terry Ball, IQ = 103 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low HSC. Terry and her parents were born in England; Terry arrived in Australia aged 8; Mr Ball is a postal investigator and Mrs Ball is a clerk.

> Most of the teachers that I have are pretty O.K. They mostly encourage me with schoolwork, one in particular usually helps me solve most of my personal problems, which I can't seem to tell my parents but I can tell him, as he is not as old as my parents and therefore understands me better.
>
> Most of them are very fair in schoolwork and their marking systems, and they generally try to help with any problems connected with schoolwork.

Kerry Griffiths, IQ = 127 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium HSC. Kerry and her father were born in Australia; Mrs Griffiths was born in Denmark; Mr Griffiths is a pharmaceutical adviser.

> We should be able to go to our principal and complain about a teacher who is lazy and that the principal does not turn the facts around and say that you are to blame. Teachers should also try to mark your work in the quickest time possible. Teachers should not pick favourites and also some teachers just read out of a textbook and tough bananas to anybody who cant understand or cant keep up. Also teachers should respect our private rights and trust us more, at the moment we are not trusted to do anything we have to line up in lines like we did in kindergarten. its disgusting.

Stefan Kola, IQ = 114 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low HSC. Stefan was born in Scotland and arrived in Australia aged 9; Mr and Mrs Kola were born in Cyprus; Mr Kola is a factory owner and Mrs Kola is a factory worker. They were interviewed in English.

> I have found teachers at this school quite good, there are the teachers you treat with courtesy who are average, the teachers you treat as a friend - equal basis no superiority they are the best I feel, you can really communicate with them Most teachers are really good with the exception of one prejiduce teacher (can't stand racist) but never the less all teachers are nice, encouraging, and friendly.

Stefan aspired to be a lawyer in Grades 9 and 10 but changed his aspiration to television or film director in Grade 11. In Grade 10 Stefan said that both his father and mother would be disappointed if he did not go on to the HSC. In response to the question on the influence that his father and mother had had on his hopes about education and jobs, Stefan stated: 'My mother has not given me much influence except she wants me to be a success (every mothers dream). But, Dad had influenced me in a business manner.' He also commented that, 'My brother has influenced me in the way he tells me anything I wish to know about university...'.

Mr and Mrs Kola have two sons and Stefan is the younger. They commented that Stefan's performance at school is average and that history and English are his best subjects. They indicated that he found teachers friendly and helpful. Mr and Mrs Kola also spoke glowingly about the teachers.

Int What do you think of teachers at school?

Mo I think good. They very good.

Int They're very good↑

Mo Yes.

Int How are they good? Which way?

Mo Oh well, its good for the kids. They are for the boys at school.

Mr and Mrs Kola reported that Stefan would like to be a lawyer but they were not sure if he is good enough. Mr Kola would like Stefan to go to university but he responded as follows to a question about how the final decision concerning Stefan's future would be made.

Fr Oh I always encourage him to carry on but I won't force him if he doesn't want to, but as far as I know he wants to carry on.

Int Yes, but how will the decision be made?

Fr What do you mean, who's going to make it?

Int Well, who? How?

Fr It's up to him, he's going to make the decision of course.

Maria Ferrera, IQ = 131 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 11; school accreditation: high SC and left school. Maria was born in Australia and both Mr and Mrs Ferrera were born in Poland; Mr Ferrera is a fitter and turner and Mrs Ferrera is a factory worker. They were interviewed in English.

Some teachers at school try to teach but are either boring

> or unable to control the class. Lessons are set straight out of a text book which is just like learning from a computer. Some teachers are so conceited as they feel they are so superior to pupils that they make sarcastic comments about the inability of their pupils, which ruins the ego of the pupils causing them more damage than help. In cases like this, this is why pupils leave school early as they feel there is no use trying.
>
> There should be more inspectors controlling the way teachers carry on their classroom activity.
>
> Teachers should also treat students as individuals not just a name on the roll with a series of marks alongside. They should take interest in their jobs and not just consider their pay packet.

In Grade 9 Maria's occupational aspiration was to do 'something interesting in the field of research' and in Grade 10 she hoped to do research in advertising or to become an interior decorator. She indicated that both her parents would be disappointed if she did not go on to the HSC. When asked to write a few sentences on the influence that her parents had had on her hopes about education and jobs, Maria replied: 'My parents want me to get a good education, preferably to go on to university but it is my decision.'

Maria gave the following reason for leaving school: 'I didn't like the school system i.e. lack of freedom, conformity. Sick of being at school for so long. Lack of independance i.e. parents.' She responded, 'slightly yes' to the question, 'Would you have liked to stay longer at secondary school?' At the time of her response to the leavers' questionnaire, Maria had a job as a clerk. She said that this job is not the occupation she hopes to get in the long run. Although she was not undertaking any further education courses at the time of her reply she still hopes to go to technical college and get the HSC with a view to getting into teachers' college. She said that she felt that she needed 'a lot more' information about jobs and courses.

Mr and Mrs Ferrera have two daughters and Maria is the younger. At the time of the interview Maria's sister was attending university. Mr and Mrs Ferrera stated that Maria was not very interested in school. They received a note from the teachers which indicated that Maria was very unsettled in school. Mrs Ferrera was so concerned that she took Maria to their family doctor to see if'...she was sick or something'. The doctor said that nothing was wrong with her and that most children go through this stage.

Int Does Maria like school?

Mo No, I don't really know. I couldn't tell if she really likes school - she goes now - I suppose she likes it because now she says she is going on to the HSC.

Fr I don't know - we will see how she goes. She doesn't talk a great deal about this at home...She was quiet, nervous, and not wanting to go.

Int What do you think of teachers at the school?

Fr I think she was unhappy with one teacher.

Mo She picked on her all the time. Whenever she turn, get up, for no reason she picked on her.

Int Was this a particular subject?

Mo Yes, one teacher always put her into detention for no reason. I wanted to see this teacher but she (Maria) said that I'd better not as it would make it worse for her. I didn't see the teacher.

Mr and Mrs Ferrera would like Maria to enter whatever job she would like to do. They would be satisfied so long as she was happy. When asked how the final decision will be made they replied as follows:

Mo I suppose she has to make the decision - what she wants to do. I can't tell her what I want her to do - she makes up her own mind.

Fr You can't force them.

Kerry Blanch, IQ = 124 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Kerry and her parents were born in Australia; Mr Blanch is a teacher and Mrs Blanch a hairdresser.

> The teachers at my school are easy to get on with they will always help you and go out of their way to do so. They are fun to be with and are very understanding. They do a great deal for the school, work very hard and I feel we are extremely lucky for them to be like this, and really dont realise how lucky we are. They do not make us feel shy in front of them and talking to them is just like talking to a close friend.

Patricia O'Brien, IQ = 109 (medium); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Patricia and her parents were born in Australia; Mr O'Brien is a PMG foreman.

> Very tiresome, uninteresting, totally lazy, selfish, and above all intollerent. They have no personal interest in you, only give you attention when they wish to reprimand you. They set boring, irrelevant work that contains no use to our future. They treat their work as a teacher (instead of a vocation) as a task they have to do to be paid. The excel at being cutting, rude, and supposedly witty. (to themselves). They gain great satisfaction in getting the upperhand of all arguments with their students. They are a good reason for leaving.

Matthew Sheffield, IQ = 127 (high); Aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Matthew and his parents were born in England; He arrived in Australia aged 3 years. Mr Sheffield is a foreman painter and Mrs Sheffield is a cook.

> The teachers at school express their individual feelings unduely during lessons they are influenced by no pupil and keep to themselves when dealings with the students. Although they are normal every day people and their staff antics express this. They change as the enter the classrooms ready to take out the stress and strain of life on unfortunate students whos stress and strain outnumbers theirs tenfold. I don't think a teachers life is easy and I don't necessarily put them down continuously but often they overuse or disuse the power and trust given to them. I wouldn't be a teacher if my life depended on it and I wouldn't want to be subjected to the critism I and other students give but as I have said some deserve it and some do not. The ones that do deserve this treatment have brought it on the others and this is the visious circle.

Matthew aspired to be a lawyer or a journalist. He indicated that both his parents would be disappointed if he did not go on to the HSC and when asked to write a few sentences on the influence that his father and mother have had on his hopes about education and jobs he wrote:

> They have encouraged learning, getting a good job but have no direct influence on my choice. If I decide to leave society, live nowhere and do almost nothing they would be upset and disappointed but if I decide to I will.

Matthew is an only child. Mr and Mrs Sheffield indicated that Matthew liked school and was a very, very good student. They were impressed with the teachers.

Int What do you think of teachers at the school?

Fr Very good.

Mo We're very impressed with the school and the teachers. And the teachers are very liked.

Mr and Mrs Sheffield feel that Matthew is ahead of them academically.

Int Is there anyone in the family who normally gives Matthew help with homework?

Fr You're joking.

Mo He left us behind.

Fr He left us behind five years ago.

Mr and Mrs Sheffield believe that Matthew will go on to university and do something associated with law. They said they would guide him but that the final decision on the future was his.

Anna Blegojevic, IQ = 88 (low); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Anna was born in Australia and her parents were born in Hungary; Mr Blegojevic is a fork-lift driver and Mrs Blegojevic a plastic moulder.

> I feel that they are unfair, bitchy, and smart asses. There are some that are all right but the others, they only think of themselves and they don't listen to you when you have a problem. They just say why weren't you paying attention. The teachers are there to help you not to be bloodly idiots. My Art teacher is all right sometimes but she doesn't help or explain things to us. They all pay attention to the *NEW AUSTRALIANS* more than they do to *US* My English is a *BITCH* she gives us so much work and we all do it and when we hand our work in she gives us a low mark and says we don't try hard enough. What do the teachers expect, bloody geniuses, or do they just think were bloody *STUPID*. I wish they had more "*SENSE*". I think the whole Education System is up the *duff.* They should give us more *FREEDOM*!

William Slade, IQ = 122 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low HSC. William and his parents were born in Australia; Mr Slade is clerk and Mrs Slade a part-time cook.

> Most think there 'God'. They are often rude. They have to much authority in my eyes. And I'd rather not talk about it.

The following comments were made in response to the essay topic: 'How does school affect teenagers?'

Christine Morgan, IQ = 106 (medium); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school. Christine and her parents were born in England. She arrived in Australia aged 5 years; Mr Morgan is a T.V. mechanic and Mrs Morgan is a factory worker.

> School is one place where anything can happen, it sort of plans your whole life style. From the time you begin school people will always knock you if you have a handicap or a physical defect, and you grow up and become very withdrawn. It is said that school kids and teachers are the worst people to nail you down to the ground, they'll always let you know if your out of the crowd and you don't belong.
>
> [extract]

Rodney Jefferson, IQ = 116 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school. Rodney and his parents were born in Australia; Mr Jefferson is a manual arts teacher and Mrs Jefferson is a secretary.

> School kind of turns you off life. With this assessment system, its a real bumwrap. The teachers can have it in for you and give you a low mark. But people say to this, 'no teachers like that, they wouldn't do it,' well they can have it in for you and you gotta *believe* it.
>
> [extract]

In the analyses of 'good things' and 'problems' of school, the most frequently mentioned, single negative issue concerned 'problems' of teachers and their personal and professional qualities. Attention was drawn to teachers who were authoritarian, inconsiderate, unfair and who teach poorly. In the case studies a number of students complained about teachers who read straight from the textbooks, which no doubt partly contributes to students complaints about lessons being boring. Other students felt that some teachers were only interested in their 'pay packets', and that the teachers' lack of enthusiasm soon dampened any initial enthusiasm on the part of the students. Slowness in marking student assignments also cooled student interest.

Students indicated that they wanted teachers to show concern for them as individuals, and to treat them with the respect they would show other adults. The case studies contain numerous complaints illustrating some teachers' insensitivity to the feelings of their students, but a few very perceptive students realised that some of these teachers were compensating for their own frustrations by being sarcastic and rude to their students. Many students felt that some teachers misused the power and trust associated with their role. Some students expressed a desire for the principal to act as an independent arbiter in disputes between teachers and students.

Despite the negative attitudes shown towards teachers in the question on 'good things' and 'problems' of school, when students were asked the following specific question on teachers, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', it became apparent that while earlier criticisms of teachers were confirmed, a number of students experienced satisfying relationships with teachers. There were terms such as: understanding, fair, helpful, friendly, good, reliable and trustworthy, used by students to describe teachers. Some spoke of teachers as friends whom they could talk to, to gain help in solving their problems - even problems not related to school work. However, the majority of students (65 per cent) made both positive and negative attitude comments about teachers in response to this question.

Interest in School Subjects

In Grade 10 we asked students: 'In the following subjects how much of the work interests you?' Opposite each subject students could respond by ticking a box under one of the following headings:

I do not take this subject. ALL MOST SOME NONE

The results, cross-tabulated by sex and parents' country of birth, are shown in Tables 17 to 19.

Humanities Subjects

Approximately three-quarters of students said they were interested in 'all' or 'most' of the work in English, history and geography (Table 17A). Over half the students responded in this way to language and Asian social studies while less than one-third gave this response to social studies. With the exception of geography, girls expressed considerably more interest in the humanities subjects than boys.

In each case (except history) a higher proportion of the NES migrant students were interested in 'all' or 'most' of their work than students whose parents were both Australian born, e.g. 65 per cent of the NES group responded positively to language compared with 46 per cent of the group with Australian-born parents. Several variations in proportions who responded positively occur among the NES sub-groups (Table 17B) e.g. a lower proportion (69 per cent) of the students with both parents born in Italy said they were interested in 'all' or 'most' of their English work compared with an 86 per cent response from the Lebanese group.

Mathematics, Science, Commerce

About three-quarters (74 per cent) of the students studying science said they were interested in 'all' or 'most' of the work (Table 18A). The comparable figures for mathematics and commerce were 60 per cent and 52 per cent respectively. Girls were noticeably less interested in these subjects than boys, while the group of students with NES backgrounds showed more positive attitudes than the other groups. A higher proportion of Lebanese students responded positively to the mathematics and science subjects than the other NES sub-groups (Table 18B).

Practical Subjects and Arts

Four-fifths of the students studying industrial arts said they were interested in 'all' or 'most' of the work; three-quarters of the home

TABLE 17A

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS IN GRADE 10 WHO WERE INTERESTED IN MOST OR ALL THE WORK IN THE HUMANITIES SUBJECTS

Sample Description	Subject					
	English	Language	History	Geography	Asian Social Studies	Social Studies
Total Sample (a)	72 (N=2,581)(b)	54 (N=756)(c)	72 (N=1,163)(d)	75 (N=1,701(e)	59 (N=251)	28 (N=97)
Sex: Male	65	45	65	77	50	25
Female	79	59	76	74	68	33
Parents' Country of Birth:						
Both Australian	70	46	73	75	60	25
Both non-English-speaking countries (f)	76	65	72	76	60	31
Another or different English-speaking countries	73	52	71	76	49	..(g)
One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	80	56	64	75	78	..

(a) Cell frequencies for total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by Parents' Country of Birth, due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

(b) N represents the total number of students taking the subject. There are approximatley equal numbers of boys and girls except where footnotes (c), (d), (e) indicate the contrary.

(c) 476 girls studied a language compared with 280 boys.

(d) 716 girls studied history compared with 447 boys.

(e) 787 girls studied geography compared with 914 boys.

(f) Table 17B contains a more detailed breakdown of this group.

(g) Where cell frequencies are less than five, no percentages are shown.

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TABLE 17B

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS IN GRADE 10 WHO WERE INTERESTED IN MOST OR ALL THE WORK IN THE HUMANITIES SUBJECTS

Students with both parents born in non-English-speaking countries

Parents' Country of Birth	Subject					
	English	Language	History	Geography	Asian Social Studies	Social Studies
Both Greek (N = 109)	81	53	86	76	77	..
Both Italian (N = 87)	69	61	61	78	70	..
Both Lebanese (N = 48)	86	56	71	72	..	..
Both Maltese (N = 37)	72	..(a)	69	76	..	..
Both Yugoslav (N = 51)	80	77	80	76	..	..
Another non-English-speaking country (both same) (N = 224)	73	73	74	78	57	..
Different non-English-speaking countries (N = 79)	76	65	52	70	..	..

(a) Where cell frequencies are less than five, no percentages are shown.

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TABLE 18A

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS IN GRADE 10 WHO WERE INTERESTED IN MOST OR ALL THE WORK IN MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, COMMERCE

Sample Description	Subject		
	Mathematics	Science	Commerce
Total Sample (a)	60 (N=2,591)(b)	74 (N=2,571)	52 (N=1,159)(c)
Sex: Male	69	80	56
Female	52	68	49
Parents' Country of Birth:			
Both Australian	58	72	52
Both non-English-speaking countries (d)	69	78	52
Another or different English-speaking countries	58	76	51
One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	57	69	38

(a) Cell frequencies for total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by Parents' Country of Birth, due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

(b) N represents the total number of students taking the subject. There are approximatley equal numbers of boys and girls studying mathematics and science.

(c) 684 girls studied commerce compared with 475 boys.

(d) Table 18B contains a more detailed breakdown of this group.

TABLE 18B

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS IN GRADE 10 WHO WERE INTERESTED IN MOST OR ALL THE WORK IN MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, COMMERCE

Students with both parents born in non-English-speaking countries

Parents' Country of Birth	Subject		
	Mathematics	Science	Commerce
Both Greek (N = 109)	63	74	53
Both Italian (N = 87)	68	80	42
Both Lebanese (N = 48)	82	86	68
Both Maltese (N = 37)	82	79	..(a)
Both Yugoslav (N-= 51)	78	80	71
Another non-English-speaking country (both same) (N = 224)	68	75	51
Different non-English-speaking countries (N = 79)	63	85	38

(a) Where cell frequencies are less than five, no percentages are shown.

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economics and art students and three-fifths of the needlework students gave a positive response (Table 19A). However, there were only 27 per cent of music students who said they were interested in 'all' or 'most' of the work. Boys expressed a low level of interest in needlework and home economics in comparison with girls and similarly, girls were less interested than boys in industrial arts. With the exception of needlework, the trend for a higher proportion of the NES group to be interested in 'all' or 'most' of the work in subjects was not repeated in the area of practical subjects. Variations in the levels of interest expressed by the separate NES sub-groups are shown in Table 19B.

To sum up, our findings reveal that girls display more interest than boys in the humanities subjects while the reverse result applies for mathematics and science subjects (Tables 17 to 19). Relatively few boys take home economics and few of those who do are interested in all or most of this subject. Similarly girls display a lack of interest in industrial arts.

Interest in school subjects can be classified into several groups:

(a) Over 80 per cent of students are interested in all or most of the subject:

(i) industrial arts

(b) Between 70 and 79 per cent of students are interested in all or most of the subjects:

(i) geography
(ii) science
(iii)art
(iv) home economics
(v) English
(vi) history

(c) Between 60 and 69 per cent of students are interested in all or most of the subjects:

(i) needlework
(ii) mathematics

(d) Between 50 and 59 per cent of students are interested in all or most of the subjects:

TABLE 19A

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS IN GRADE 10 WHO WERE INTERESTED IN MOST OR ALL THE WORK IN PRACTICAL SUBJECTS OR IN ARTS

Sample description		Practical subjects			Arts	
		Needlework	Home Economics	Industrial Arts	Music	Art
Total Sample (a)		61 (N = 451)	73 (N = 706)	81 (N = 925)	27 (N = 1,296)	73 (N = 654)
Sex:	Male	9 (N = 58)	36 (N = 88)	84 (N = 872)	22 (N = 535)	66 (N = 261)
	Female	69 (N = 393)	78 (N = 618)	38 (N = 53)	31 (N = 761)	78 (N = 393)
Parents' Country of Birth:						
Both Australian		61	76	85	28	75
Both non-English-speaking countries (b)		68	67	82	29	72
Another or different English-speaking countries		49	71	68	23	69
One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country		57	55	81	25	72

(a) Cell frequencies for total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by Parents' Country of Birth, due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

(b) Table 19B contains a more detailed breakdown of this group.

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TABLE 19B

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS IN GRADE 10 WHO WERE INTERESTED IN MOST OR ALL THE WORK IN PRACTICAL SUBJECTS OR IN ARTS

Students with both parents born in non-English-speaking countries

Parents' Country of Birth	Practical subjects			Arts	
	Needle-work	Home Economics	Industrial Arts	Music	Art
Both Greek (N = 109)	83	74	83	29	82
Both Italian (N = 87)	58	53	84	29	68
Both Lebanese (N = 48)	..(a)	56	80	..	63
Both Maltese (N = 37)	78	83	95	18	..
Both Yugoslav (N = 51)	78	92	87	33	73
Another non-English-speaking country (both same) (N = 224)	69	60	84	36	73
Different non-English-speaking countries (N = 79)	43	60	65	21	71

(a) Where cell frequencies are less than five, no percentages are shown.

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(i) Asian social studies
(ii) language
(iii) commerce

(e) Less than 30 per cent of students are interested in all or most of the subjects:

(i) music
(ii) social studies

We can conclude that, in general, most students were interested in their school subjects but the interest might best be described as 'lukewarm'. Student interest varies markedly from subject to subject.

Career Information

We asked students the following question in each year of the survey: 'What sources of information have been very helpful to you in finding out about jobs or educational courses that you may wish to enter when you leave high school?'

A list of possible helpful sources (shown in Table 20A) was provided and students were asked to tick as many sources as applied.

During their Grade 9 year, students rated 'parents', 'workers in desired jobs' and 'friends' highly as being very helpful sources of information about jobs or education courses. Twenty-two per cent of students rated teachers and 11 per cent rated high school career advisers as being 'very helpful'. A lower proportion of students with parents born overseas in a NES country (54 per cent) rated their parents as being 'very helpful' in comparison with the remaining three groups classified on the parents' country of birth variable. Within this NES group, student ratings ranged from 35 per cent for Greek parents to 65 per cent for Maltese parents (Table 20B).

Numbers of students in Grade 11 are lower than in Grade 9 due to those who left school. Grade 11 students rated, in descending order, 'careers handbooks', 'workers in desired jobs' and 'parents' as 'very helpful' sources of information. Twenty-eight per cent of students rated teachers and 30 per cent rated high school career advisers as being 'very helpful'. Less than one-third of Grade 11 students with parents born in a NES country rated their parents as being 'very helpful' sources of information.

Students were asked, 'Do you feel you need more information about the

TABLE 20A

HELPFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT JOBS OR EDUCATIONAL COURSES

Percentage of students who classified the following courses of information as very helpful to them in finding out about jobs or educational courses which they might wish to enter on leaving high school

Sample Description	Percentage of students who classified the following sources as helpful:																None helpful	
	Significant others						Work contacts				Professional advice							
	Parents		Teachers		Friends		Workers in desired jobs		Own job experience		High school career advisers		Vocational guidance personnel		Careers handbook			
	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11
Total Sample (a)	63	48	22	28	42	41	57	59	25	14	11	30	13	31	32	72	8	3
Sex: Male	63	53	21	23	39	36	56	52	33	17	13	28	14	38	34	70	8	3
Female	62	43	22	32	45	45	58	64	17	11	10	33	11	25	31	73	8	2
Parents' Country of Birth: (b) Both Australian	65	53	20	29	43	39	60	61	25	26	10	28	13	33	33	70	8	2
Both non-English-speaking countries (c)	54	32	27	28	46	47	50	58	23	10	14	34	12	29	29	74	9	5
Another or different English-speaking countries	66	54	23	26	38	35	58	55	26	11	11	28	13	28	36	71	7	..
One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	61	55	21	18	31	47	44	47	24	25	11	35	15	33	30	82	10	(d)

(a) Cell frequencies for total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by parents' country of birth, due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

(b) See sample description Table 1 Ap.A for the numbers in each ethnic group. Numbers in Grade 11 are lower due to those who have left school or transferred to other schools.

(c) Table 20B contains a more detailed breakdown of this group.

(d) Where cell frequencies are less than five, no percentages are shown.

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TABLE 20B

HELPFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT JOBS OR EDUCATIONAL COURSES

Percentage of students who classified the following sources of information as very helpful to them in finding out about jobs or educational courses which they might wish to enter on leaving high school

(Students with both parents born in non-English-speaking countries)

Parents' Country of Birth	Percentage of students who classified the following sources as helpful:																None helpful	
	Significant others						Work contacts				Professional Advice							
	Parents		Teachers		Friends		Workers in desired jobs		Own job experience		High school career advisers		Vocational guidance personnel		Careers handbook			
	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11	Gr. 9	Gr. 11
Both Greek	35	27	29	38	40	56	58	61	19	11	17	32	15	21	28	80	12	..
Both Italian	54	34	24	37	43	53	55	68	26	..	16	42	13	26	32	68	9	..
Both Lebanese	60	..(a)	26	..	46	44	42	44	28	..	20	44	14	8	32	63	10	..
Both Maltese	65	..	30	..	51	..	49	..	39	..	19	..	22	..	27	..	..	..
Both Yugoslav	59	25	41	35	41	40	43	50	14	..	..	35	..	..	29	70	..	..
Another non-English-speaking country (both same)	60	33	23	17	50	45	62	57	21	12	11	30	9	36	29	73	7	..
Different non-English-speaking countries	55	44	25	38	45	35	50	56	24	..	18	41	11	32	26	74	14	..

(a) Where cell frequencies are less than five, no percentages are shown.

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jobs and courses open to you?' In Grade 9, 81 per cent of students said that they needed a 'fair amount' or 'a lot more' information (Table 21A). Comparable figures for Grades 10 and 11 were 64 per cent and 76 per cent respectively. A higher proportion of students with parents born in a NES country said they needed 'a fair amount' or 'a lot more' information in comparison with the remaining three groups classified by the parents' country of birth variable. Table 21B reveals a consistent response across ethnic sub-groups except for the Maltese group in Grade 10 where only 49 per cent of students said they needed 'a fair amount' or 'a lot more' information. The fact that most of the Maltese group left school at the end of the SC may have influenced this result.

In their Grade 10 year students were asked:

(a) Have you made any inquiries about a particular course or job?

(b) If yes, where from and what did you find out?

Fifty-nine per cent of students indicated that they had made inquiries about a particular course or job. The main sources approached by students were 'the job place', 'career adviser or employment agencies' and 'educational institutions' (Table 22). A higher proportion of boys than girls sought information from 'the job place' while more girls than boys sought information from educational institutions (Table 23). Students with both parents born in a NES country tended to rely more heavily on 'careers advisers or employment agencies' in comparison with the remaining groups classified on the parents' country of birth variable.

To sum up, during their Grade 9 year, students reported that 'parents' and 'workers in desired jobs' were very helpful sources of information about jobs and education courses but in Grade 11 students relied less on parents and more frequently turn towards careers handbooks. Less than one-third of students rated teachers and high school career advisers as being very helpful sources of information, and a high proportion of students overall felt that they needed either a fair amount or a lot more information about jobs and courses open to them.

Reasons for Leaving School

Altogether 1715 students left school before the end of Grade 11, and we followed up as many of these as we could trace (63 per cent) by mail questionnaires and telephone. We analysed the replies to determine if a

TABLE 21A

STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: 'DO YOU FEEL YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE JOBS AND COURSES OPEN TO YOU?'

Sample Description	Those who said they needed a fair amount, or a lot more information:			
	Grade 9		Grade 10(a)	Grade 11
	Number	%	%	%
Total Sample (b)	3,015	81	64	76
Sex: Male	1,426	79	63	72
Female	1,589	82	64	80
Parents' Country of Birth:				
Both Australian	1,684	79	61	73
Both non-English-speaking countries (c)	643	88	75	80
Another or different English-speaking countries	495	79	64	75
One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	125	77	67	87

(a) Cell numbers are progressively smaller in Grade 10 and Grade 11 due to the number of students who have left school or transferred to different schools.

(b) Cell frequencies for total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by parents' country of birth due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

(c) Table 21B contains a more detailed breakdown of this group.

TABLE 21B

STUDENT RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'DO YOU FEEL YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE JOBS AND COURSES OPEN TO YOU?'

Students with both parents born in non-English-speaking countries

Parents' Country of Birth	Percentage who said they needed a fair amount or a lot more information:			
	Gr. 9		Gr. 10	Gr. 11
	Number	%	% (a)	%
Both Greek	109	88	79	77
Both Italian	87	86	78	75
Both Lebanese	48	83	75	75
Both Maltese	36	89	49	75
Both Yugoslav	51	82	77	80
Another non-English-speaking country (both same)	233	88	71	85
Different non-English-speaking countries	79	84	79	79

(a) Cell numbers are progressively smaller in Grade 10 and Grade 11 due to the number of students who have left school or transferred to different schools.

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TABLE 22

GRADE 10 STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHERE DID YOU SEEK INFORMATION?' (a)

(Concerning Jobs and Courses)

Sources of information	Total N of responses (a)	
	NC (b)	%
The Job Place:		
government agency or board, city council (c)	215	10
factory or building site	101	5
bank, accounting firm	100	5
armed forces	66	3
hospitals, or related institutions	61	3
places where: student works part time, student has already applied	48	2
airlines	16	1
Sub-total	607	(29)
People Doing the Same Thing:		
people engaged in course or job	88	4
friend or relation doing course or job	59	3
particular person mentioned by name	5	..
Sub-total	152	(7)
Relatives, Family, Family Friends	154	(7)
Educational Institutions		
educational institutions, academics	325	16
art school, drama school, film school	16	1
teachers, school	98	5
Sub-total	439	(21)
Careers Adviser or Employment Agencies	526	25
Media: Newspaper, Magazine Article, Books, Films	176	8
Miscellaneous	32	2
Uncoded	2	--
GRAND TOTAL	2,088 (d)	100

(a) Only 1,547 students responded to this question as it was answered only by those who had sought information about jobs and courses. 41% of the total Grade 10 sample had not made such enquiries.

(b) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

(c) Government agencies include departments such as police, wildlife, Telecom, etc.

(d) Average number of responses per respondent = 1.3.

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TABLE 23

GRADE 10 STUDENTS WHO RESPONDED TO THE QUESTION: 'WHERE DID YOU SEEK INFORMATION?' (re jobs or courses) (a)

By sex and by Parents' Country of Birth

Sample description		N of students who responded to the question	Students who sought information from:											
			The job place		People doing the same thing		Relations		Educational institutions		Careers adviser or employment agency		Media	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total Sample (b)		1,547(c)	514	33	145	9	143	9	407	26	475	31	167	11
Sex:	Male	670	289	43	55	8	67	10	101	15	207	31	63	9
	Female	877	225	26	90	10	76	9	306	35	268	31	104	12
Parents' Country of Birth:														
Both Australian		898	329	37	96	11	86	10	246	27	248	28	92	10
Both non-English-speaking countries		281	60	21	17	6	22	8	72	26	124	44	39	14
Another or different English-speaking countries		270	85	32	23	9	22	8	69	26	78	29	24	9
One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country		65	27	42	6	9	10	15	14	22	16	25	8	12

(a) Only those students who indicated that they had made enquiries about a particular course or job answered this question. The percentages of Grade 10 students who had made such enquiries were as follows: 59% total sample, 54% male, 64% female, 61% Australian, 50% of those with parents from non-English-speaking countries, 64% of those with both parents from English-speaking countries, and 66% of those with one parent born in an English-speaking country and the other born in a non-English-speaking country.

(b) Cell frequencies for total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by Parents' Country of Birth, due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

(c) As some students had sought information from several places, the sum of the numbers in the individual categories exceeds the total number of students.

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response bias occurred with respect to such variables as sex, SES, IQ and parents' country of birth. We found that proportionally more girls than boys responded and that the response rate for the NES group was marginally lower than for the remaining groups classified by the parents' country of birth. variables. No response bias occurred on the other variables. Students were asked to 'Write a few lines about why you left secondary school when you did', and the results are summarised in Tables 24 and 25. The major categories that emerged were 'dissatisfaction with: teachers, school', 'to obtain: work, training for work', 'other personal reasons' and 'home factors'. School lessons were judged to be boring and unenjoyable and schoolwork to be irrelevant to chosen careers. A number of students said that schoolwork was too hard for them while others said that they had poor relationships with teachers.

Overall, 59 per cent of students mentioned 'dissatisfaction with teachers, school', as a reason for leaving [see footnotes, Table 25.] We could call these 'push factors'. There were 53 per cent of all boys and 63 per cent of all girls who mentioned 'dissatisfaction with: teachers, school' as a reason for leaving. We also found that there were proportionally more higher IQ students (60 per cent compared with 56 per cent for the lower IQ group) and proportionally more higher SES students (63 per cent compared with 57 per cent for the lower SES group) who mentioned 'dissatisfaction with teachers, school' as a reason for leaving. There were 39 per cent of students who gave 'dissatisfaction with: teachers, school' as their only response to the question.

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Overall, 46 per cent of students mentioned 'to obtain work, training for work' as a reason for leaving. These could be termed 'pull factors'. There were 54 per cent of all boys and 39 per cent of all girls who mentioned 'to obtain work, training for work' as a reason for leaving. We also found that there were proportionally more higher IQ students (48 per cent compared with 43 per cent for the lower IQ group) who mentioned 'to obtain work, training for work' as a reason for leaving. No proportional variations occurred in this respect on the SES variable. There were 28 per cent of students who gave the reason 'to obtain work, training for work' as their only response to the question.

To sum up, our results indicate that approximately 40 per cent of students left school mainly because of push factors, 30 per cent left mainly

TABLE 24

REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL GIVEN IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WRITE A FEW LINES ABOUT WHY YOU LEFT SECONDARY SCHOOL WHEN YOU DID'

Comments	N of students making comment	% of total students
Dissatisfaction with: teachers, school		
School lessons are: boring, unenjoyable	222	23
School work is: irrelevant to chosen career, waste of time if not going on to tertiary	203	21
School work is too hard, pressure too great, student not smart enough to go on	128	13
Poor teachers, poor relationship with teachers	56	6
School system is too inflexible in: course planning, rules	17	2
Compelled, encouraged to leave by teachers	16	2
Being in a low class at school	7	1
Did not want to repeat a year	4	..
Sub-total	(563)	(59)a
To obtain: work, training for work		
To go to work	179	18
To take up an apprenticeship (includes hair dressing, nurse training)	112	12
To earn money	74	8
To go to secretarial or business college	70	7
To get work in case of worsening unemployment, hard to find job at end of year or when older	35	4
Other courses related to future job	11	1
To join armed forces	9	1
Sub-total	(443)	(46)
Other personal reasons		
Own laziness, inability to concentrate on studies, workload too heavy	45	5
To earn money to obtain something specific	29	3
Desire for independence, to be self-supporting	29	2
To fulfil some ambition other than work, self-fulfilment, desire for experience	24	3
Illness	12	1
Other personal reasons	18	2
Sub-total	(131)	(14)
Home factors		
Family financial problems	28	3
Compelled, encouraged to leave by parents	12	1
Travel overseas, moving away from the school	11	1
Other family problems	15	2
Sub-total	(63)	(7)
TOTAL	1,366	

(a) The sub-total represents the number and percentage of students who made one or more comments in that category. As some students mentioned more than one aspect of the same category, the sum of the numbers beside individual comments is greater than the sub-total. As some students mentioned two or more major categories, the sum of the sub-total percentages is 126%, i.e. each student mentioned an average of 1.26 major categories.

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TABLE 25

COMBINATIONS OF MAJOR CATEGORIES OF REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL GIVEN IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: ‘WRITE A FEW LINES ABOUT WHY YOU LEFT SECONDARY SCHOOL WHEN YOU DID’

Sample description	N of students	Percentage distribution:					
		Dissatisfaction with: teachers, school only	Dissatisfaction with teachers, school and to obtain: work training for work	To obtain: work, training for work only	Personal reasons only	Home factors only	Other (a) combinations
Total Sample (b)	962	39	14	28	6	4	10
Sex: Male	419	34	17	34	5	4	5
Female	543	42	12	23	6	4	13
Parents' Country of Birth:							
Both Australian	572	39	14	28	5	3	10
Both non-English-speaking countries	176	36	15	28	3	7	11
Another or different English-speaking countries	157	38	13	28	8	4	9
One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	37	27	19	24	16	..	..

(a) Six percent mentioned dissatisfaction with: teachers, school with another factor. Four percent mentioned ‘to obtain: work, training for work,’ with another combination so that 59% of all students mentioned dissatisfaction with teachers, school and 46% of all students mentioned to obtain work, or training for work.

(b) Cell frequencies for total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by parents' country of birth, due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

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because of pull factors, and 30 per cent left for other reasons, including some which include a combination of push and pull factors.

Students were asked, 'Would you have liked to stay longer at secondary school?' There were 44 per cent of students who left school before the SC and 36 per cent of those who left after the SC who responded in the affirmative to this question (Table 26). For each group, a higher proportion of the student group with parents born in a NES country said they would have liked to stay at school longer in comparison with the remaining groups classified on the parents' country of birth variable. Similarly, a higher proportion of girls said they would have liked to stay at school longer in comparison with the result from boys. It should also be noted that approximately 40 per cent of students in the total leaver sample gave the response 'definitely no' in answer to the question.

Case studies were developed from responses to the question, 'Write a few lines about why you left school when you did'.

Marissa Agosti, IQ = 102(medium); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Job: nil. Further education course: full-time secretarial. Desire to have stayed longer at secondary school: slightly yes. Job aspiration in Grade 10: secretary. Marissa and her mother were born in Australia and her father was born in Italy. Mr Agosti is a fruit-case maker. Mr and Mrs Agosti have four children.

> I wanted to take a secretarial course which High School did not provide.

Lawrence Markwell, IQ = 81 (low); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: left before SC. Job: apprentice motorbody builder. Further education course: part-time apprenticeship course and maths at night. Job aspiration in Grade 9: auto-electrician. Desire to have stayed longer at secondary school: definitely no. Lawrence and his parents were born in Australia. Mr Markwell is a truck driver and Mrs Markwell is a part-time driver for the blind school. They have two children.

> just didn't like it/didn't appeal to me/ some of the teachers were not all that crash hot/ some cranky and like to push you around a lot/ when I started I was put in the lower grades and it appears that we never get a better start. The interest isn't there to help those in the lower grades, consequently the child loses interest. Should be more communication

TABLE 26

STUDENT RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO STAY LONGER AT SECONDARY SCHOOL'

Sample description		Total N of responses	Left before School Certificate						Total N of responses	Left after School Certificate but before H.S.C.					
			Definitely yes	positive	Slightly yes	Slightly no	negative	Definitely no		Definitely yes	positive	Slightly yes	Slightly no	negative	Definitely no
Total Sample (a)		176	12	44	32	18	57	39	836	3	36	33	22	65	43
Sex:	Male	81	12	40	28	25	60	35	355	4	29	25	28	72	44
	Female	95	12	47	35	12	54	42	481	2	40	38	17	59	42
Parents' Country of Birth: Both Australian		94	9	39	30	15	62	47	528	2	34	32	20	66	46
Both non-English-speaking countries		35	23	66	43	23	34	--	140	7	41	34	31	59	28
Another or different English-speaking countries		29	17	45	28	21	56	35	126	--	36	34	20	63	44
One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country		13	--	--	--	--	92	77	27	--	41	33	--	59	44

(a) Cell frequencies for total sample by sex are slightly higher than those classified by parents' country of birth, due to the inclusion of students for whom the country of birth of one or both parents is unknown.

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> between student and teacher, should be more of a friend than authority.

Marcia Gandy, IQ = 107 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school. Job: nil. Further education course: full-time secretarial. Desire to have stayed longer at secondary school: definitely no. Job aspiration in Grade 10: actress or ballet dancer. Marcia and her parents were born in Australia. Mr Gandy is an artist-designer and Mrs Gandy is a nurse. They have three children.

> I felt it would not be beneficial for the work I wish to enter into as a career if I continued.

Marcia's hopes for further education in the next three years:

> I hope to enter N.I.D.A. (National Institute of Dramatic Art) and if not try again or become a full-time ballet student.

Perry Brand, IQ = 95 (low); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: left before SC. Job: station assistant on railways. Further education course: no answer but seems to be interested in a photography course. Perry and his parents were born in Australia. Mr Brand was a shop assistant before he died and Mrs Brand is a shop demonstrator. There are four children.

> I had left school and went to work. I though it would be good, but now I know I should have stayed.

Stephen Truscott, IQ = 103 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school. Job: junior station assistant. Further education course: nil. Desire to have stayed longer at secondary school: slightly yes. Job aspiration in Grade 10: banker or accountant. Stephen and his mother were born in Australia and his father was born in England. Mr Truscott is a land clearer. Mr and Mrs Truscott have three children.

> Because of the cost of staying was to much and my twin sister want to be a teacher, so I lefted.

Martha Moravi, IQ = 81 (low); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: left before SC. Job: nil. Further education course: full-time secretarial. Desire to have stayed longer at secondary school: definitely yes. Job aspiration in Grade 9: secretary. Martha was born in Australia, her father was born in Italy and her mother was born in Greece. Mr Moravi is a paint-stripper and Mrs Moravi works for Sunbeam. They have two children.

> I went to Europe and I had lost two years of school. I like to go to school and learn all the interesting subjects. Because they wouldn't let me go on with the school. I do not know why they did this to me.

When asked what would make school a better place to attend Martha replied:

> If everybody would be in normal streams than lower ones. So that they would now like the smarter ones...we do lower work than the other in normal classes and that's not fair. Give us another chance.

Margaret Wilson; IQ = 126 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high SC. Margaret and her mother were born in Australia and her father was born in England. Mr Wilson is a ground engineer at Ansett Airlines.

When asked why she left secondary school, Margaret wrote: 'The higher school was boring and did not allow me enough freedom or time for my outside interests'. In Grade 10 Margaret hinted that she might leave school. When asked what might stop her getting the education or job she desired, she replied, 'The heavy bag of schoolwork and the hassle of homework will give me the shits and it might get me down to the extent that I have to leave or I might get pregnant.'

In Grade 10, when asked to comment on how she found teachers at her school Margaret replied:

> Some are nice but there's a few authoritarian freaks. Most teachers are O.K. when you get to know 'em. Some are prejudiced against you and despise you but they're not a bad bunch of pricks.

Denise Barrett, IQ = 118 (high); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: left before SC. Denise and her mother were born in Australia and her father was born in England. Mr Barrett was a council worker before ill-health caused his retirement. Mrs Barrett is an accountant.

Denise gave the following response to the question asking why she left school when she did:

> Teachers were just reding the text books all day every day. I could just as easily buy the text books and read at home. Nothing was explained anymore. One teacher in particular through me out all the time for nothing - he just hated me. I became fed-up, bored, so I left. School started to become a complete waste of time.

She gave the response, 'definitely no', when asked if she would have liked to stay longer at secondary school.

Even in Grade 9, Denise aspired to leave school before the SC and did not aspire to attend any further education courses after high school. When asked her job aspiration, Denise's first reply was, 'I don't really care so long as I'm out of school.' Her second preference was to be an accountant like her mother.

When asked what influence her parents had had on her hopes about education and jobs, she wrote: 'My mother has helped me looking for interviews, telling me how to handled them, helping me learn to tolerate nasty people you meet in the business world.' When commenting on the influence of others, she added: 'My boyfriend tells me what to say to people who upset me at work. His confidence in me helps.'

When Denise was asked to 'Write a few lines about how you found teachers at your last secondary school', she wrote:

> They were not interested in students. They seemed to only teach as a job for the money. One teacher in particular would spend each day trying to upset the students. Insulting them. Only one teacher was worth spending the time of day with.

In Grade 9 Denise's answers portray a deep alienation from school. She responded as follows when asked what she thought were good things and problems of school:

> There are, in my opinion very few good things about school. Only that you have a lot of friends and are with people your own age. Every year you bounced from class to class like a yo-yo & the teachers expect you to forget your friends and get new ones in your knew class. In first form I was in the "B" class for all subjects - I am now in the "A" classes. I don't see my close friends very often...

When asked, 'From your school education so far, do you feel that you have achieved anything?', she wrote: 'Nope Everything except maths and english is rubbish and I don't see why I should waste my energy learning science and geography when I have better things to do.'

Her response at the end of the questionnaire further illustrates that she found school to be intolerable:

> I hate school. Teachers have tried to talk me into staying because I gained an advanced level pass in every subject in the entrance to 4th form exams, but I am leaving for sure. My boy-friend disaggrees with my leaving & my family & close friends think it is up to me whether or not I "ruin" my life. But with teachers like Mr. Morris picking on me all day everyday I wouldn't go on to fourth form for a million dollars.

There are five children in the Barrett family and Denise is the second youngest. Two of the older children live away from the family home.

When Mr and Mrs Barrett were asked, 'How was Denise getting on at school?' Mrs Barrett replied:

> She was very popular in fact she was the school captain. If it had not been for the German teacher she would not have left. German was her favourite subject. However, she just could not get along with the teacher and could not face another year. Otherwise she was good in other subjects as well.

Mrs Barrett went on to stress that Denise had a personality clash with the German teacher. She said that the teacher used strange language and called the children '...twisted up mongrels'. She felt that the children felt that the teacher was 'a joke'. Mrs Barrett offered to go to the school to see the German teacher, but Denise would not let her.

Mrs Barrett mentioned that there had once been a sit-down strike at school because of 'trouble over teachers' and Denise had been one of the ring-leaders. However this was 'fixed up' and 'nothing happened'.

Mrs Barrett said that Denise was self-sufficient and conscientious. She did not need much encouragement. 'She really pushed herself and worked very hard, she was always conscientious about studying for tests.'

Mrs Barrett reported that Denise got a job as the 'Manageress of an Electronic Data Processing Section.' She had worked very hard to achieve this position. Her mother reported that she did a 'crash course' in typing and might do a 'back-up course' for computers. She had already sat for one exam. She had also learnt to operate a switch-board. Her mother commented that Denise 'tackles things systematically otherwise she would not hold such a responsible job at 15 years of age'. When Mrs Barrett was asked, 'How much do you think that Denise's future is in her own hands?', she replied, 'Her future is in her hands. She knows definitely where she is going, she has definite ideas and is very interested in her job.'

The following case studies were developed from responses from school leavers to the essay topic: 'How does school affect teenagers?'

Shirley Stone, IQ = 92 (low); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school. Shirley and her mother were born in Australia (father divorced). Mrs Stone works as a secretary.

> My overall opinion is that school is too restrictive, caused many problems eg homework - victimising, and does not allow a teenage student to develop maturity and a sense of responsibility. Truency is sometimes caused because of the dull school routine, victimisation, problems with homework and teachers - I know from experience.
>
> [extract]

Carolyn Jones, IQ = 101 (medium); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 or 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Carolyn and her parents were born in England; she arrived in Australia aged 5 years. Mr and Mrs Jones are both process workers.

> School affects teenagers in different ways. Some teenagers like school while others despise it. Many teenagers who are smart and in a top A classes enjoy school very much, while others who aren't so smart and in the low classes dislike it because of their position in grades and classes.
>
> The teenagers who aren't very good at school work find it hard to get on with teachers, because most of the teachers are on their backs all the time to do better work and try to improve their marks. The other percentage of teenagers who are smart do well because the teachers don't have to help them all the time.

Marco Rossi, IQ = 95 (low); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Marco and his parents were born in Italy; he arrived in Australia aged 1. Mr Rossi is a painter.

> I don't think that those who leave school at fifteen years of age leave because of the school but the teachers. Students who don't get along with their teachers find it hard to stay at school.
>
> [extract]

Maria Scappini, IQ = 100 (medium); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 or 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Maria was born in Australia and her parents were born in Italy. Mr Scappini is a contractor and Mrs Scappini works in a factory.

> School can be an embarressment for a person who is not very bright they may have to repeat.
>
> [extract]

Approximately 60 per cent of school leavers mentioned 'dissatisfaction with teachers and school', i.e. push factors, as a reason for leaving. Forty per cent of students gave this response as their only reason for leaving. They described school lessons as boring and irrelevant to their chosen career. While some of the students said that they left because the homework load was too heavy and lessons were too hard or too academic, there were also some higher IQ students who left because there was no sense of challenge. Even some of the students in the lower streams resented limitations placed on their educational opportunities and complained about the lack of teacher interest in their group. The case studies seemed to indicate that the damage to self-concept resulting from being put in a low class could impair the student's attitude to the whole educational experience. Even some of the higher IQ students in the case studies seem to have been 'turned off' school because they felt that they had been unfairly victimized by some of their teachers.

On the other hand, approximately 45 per cent of students left school because of pull factors - to obtain work or training for work. About 30 per cent of students gave this response as their only reason for leaving. It should be noted, however, that many of these students were seeking specific vocational education which was not provided within the school system. From those who returned leavers' questionnaires, 70 girls were attending secretarial courses, and 112 students were doing some combination of work and study - such as apprenticeships or nursing training. A further 11 students were taking some courses specifically related to their future vocation.

As only 3 per cent of students mentioned family financial problems as a reason why they left school, financial hardship does not seem to have been a very strong push factor among the students in our study. However, wanting money, the chance to be financially independent or desiring the means to gratify a particular ambition were 'pull factors' mentioned by approximately 130 students.

What Has Been Achieved from Education?

We asked the students when they were in Grade 9 to respond to the following question, 'From your school education so far, do you feel that you have achieved anything? If so, what? If not, why?'

Fifty-one per cent of the comments made by students indicated that they had achieved 'knowledge' in general and an additional 14 per cent said they had achieved knowledge in specific subject areas, such as: basic skill in literacy and numeracy, job knowledge including a knowledge of their job prospects, qualifications and study skills (Tables 27, 29).

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TABLE 27

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: ' FROM YOUR EDUCATION SO FAR DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE ACHIEVED ANYTHING?'

Summary

Category under discussion in rank order	NC(a)	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Achievement of: knowledge, education, learning in unspecified areas	2,817	51
Achievement of: social, socialising experiences (b)	1,099	20
Achievement of: job knowledge, qualifications, knowledge in named subjects, study skills (c)	797	14
Lack of achievement	424	8
Reasons offered for lack of achievement	355	6
Reasons offered for achievement	70	1
TOTAL	5,562(d)	100

(a) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

(b) Further details are shown in Table 28.

(c) Further details are shown in Table 29.

(d) There were 5,562 valid comments offered by 2,413 students, i.e. if a particular student made three comments, these were recorded opposite the relevent category.

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TABLE 28

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'FROM YOUR EDUCATION SO FAR DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE ACHIEVED ANYTHING?'

Achievement of: social, socialising experiences

Comments in rank order	NC (a)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments made in all areas
A greater understanding of life, improved outlook on life, learnt how to get on in life	334	30	6
Met other people, learnt how to get on with others	309	28	6
Developed: maturity, self-confidence responsibility, individuality, other personality traits	198	18	4
Have gained friends	168	15	3
Learnt how to: share problems, cope with problems	34	3	1
Other	56	5	1
TOTAL	1,099	100	20

(a) NC refers to the number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

TABLE 29

STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'FROM YOUR EDUCATION SO FAR DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE ACHIEVED ANYTHING?'

Achievement of: job, knowledge, qualifications, knowledge in named subjects, study skills

Comments in rank order	NC (a)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Learnt how: to read, write improved: speaking listening skills	217	27	4
Acquired knowledge of: jobs, own job prospects	200	25	4
Obtained: qualifications, good grades	166	21	3
Learnt to: work practically, do practical things	63	8	1
Learnt: study, research skills	50	6	1
Learnt: historical, geographical facts	35	4	1
Other	66	8	1
TOTAL	797	100	14

(a) NC refers to the number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

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Twenty per cent of all comments refer to the achievement of social and socialising experience. Table 28 lists some of those positive socialising outcomes of schooling: a greater understanding of life; learning how to get on with others, developing maturity and gaining new friends.

Eight per cent of all comments refer to a 'lack of achievement', i.e. nothing was achieved or 'a bit only' was achieved.

Many of the students who wrote an essay on the topic,'How does school affect teenagers?', also alluded to what they had achieved from education.

Alex Pizzoni, IQ = 98 (low); did not aspire to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school. Alex and his parents were born in Italy; he arrived in Australia aged 2 years. Mr Pizzoni is a concreter.

> The school affects teenagers in their future jobs they will be likely to get, since references plays an important part in getting a job. A student who misbehaves during his schooling will most likely to get bad references from his teachers and by the principal - these people will be the first to be discarded from the good students and therefore will get the worst kind of jobs available. To me this is the most series thing that can effect a teenagers future.
>
> [extract]

Ronald Porter, IQ = 121 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school. Ronald and his parents were born in England. Mr Porter is an industrial technician.

> Most teenagers think school is a drag. They think that it is a waste of time. But if the average teenager was asked to leave the shool, unless they a great dislike for shool or a job, they would probably say no to leaving. Most of them know that if they want to get a good job they have to stay at school. Of course, there is the no-hoper which shool effects differently. He thinks that shool is doing him more harm than good, but he will probably end up leaving at the earliest possible age and going on the dole. But the General opinion would be that school is a drag but a necessecity.
>
> [extract]

Mark Planter, IQ = 125 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium HSC. Mark and his father were born in Australia and Mrs Planter was born in England. Mr Planter is a fitter and turner.

> School however does affect teenagers in ways that may help them in later life. It teaches them disiplin so that when you get a job you will know how to take orders. It teaches you skills like woodwork and metal work which will also help you when you get a job.
>
> [extract]

Rosemary Smith, IQ = 111 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: high HSC and left school. Rosemary and her parents were born in Australia. Mr Smith is a council employee.

> A very important aspect in my opinion is the teenagers social life. You meet many different types of people and some of them become your friends. You then go out with them on weekends.
>
> School broadens your outlook in life and teaches you to live with other people and through many phases of life.
>
> [extract]

Peta Comino, IQ = 100 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low HSC. Peta was born in Australia and her parents were born in Greece. Mr Comino is a factory worker. The parents were interviewed in Greek.

> School for some teenagers is what it should be they come to get an education get the certificate leave and plan for a career and plan the future.
>
> [extract]

During her secondary school years, Peta variously aspired to be a secretary, pharmacist, nurse and primary school teacher. Peta said that her parents would not be disappointed if she did not stay at school until HSC. When asked to write a few sentences on the influence that her father and mother have had on her hopes about education and jobs, she responded, 'They would like me to finish school and get an interesting job - but no pressure is forced which I like.'

Her comments concerning teachers were:

> Teachers are allright but they should pick more interesting topics to keep the class awake. Teachers should have more of a relationship between pupils and teacher. Teachers do need more to do than what they do and to find more interest topics to us.
>
> Some teachers think they are superior to the students and expect the student to cope with more than the student can handle. On the whole I think there could be more of an improvement in lots of things at school.

Mr and Mrs Comino have four children. Peta is the second oldest with one older sister and two younger brothers. Because Mr and Mrs Comino cannot read English, they have to rely on verbal reports from Peta for information on her school progress.

Int	How is Peta getting on at school?
Fr	Now that is a question. Tell me, I who do not know letters, how can I measure a child's progress?
Mo	When I ask Peta, she says 'yes'.

Peta's parents think there is too much freedom at school:

Int	What do you think of teachers at the school?
Fr	I do not agree with the degree of freedom which they have. After a day in teachers' care, there is inadequate respect for parents.
Mo	There does not seem to be discipline at school - may be some discrimination against new Australian children.

Mr and Mrs Comino would be pleased for Peta to take up whatever occupation she wants to. Their responses to several general interview questions reflect traditional attitudes.

Int	What sort of person would you like Peta to be when she is your age?
Mo	Respectful.
Fr	A person who respects society.

Int	These days, what is most important to young people for success in later life?
Mo	To be obedient, to listen to advice.
Fr	In herself, but with direction from parents. In doing anything to really want it - to have the will to achieve it.

Janet Jones, IQ = 128 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high SC results and left school. Janet was born in Australia, her father was born in England and Mrs Jones was born in Germany. Mr Jones is a foreman for the Main Roads and Mrs Jones is a secretary.

> School, incorporates the lessons that have to be taught, socially, before 'letting the teenager loose' on society. It gets teenagers together, working as a group, and individually, and for better or worse, instilling in them a sense of competition which is a basic need to survive in our society. School is where most teenagers have to come to terms with themselves and the adults who they have to show respect. Most teenagers are shown in school that they have to, like it or not realise that they must, bear under, to their superiors, namely teachers, and take orders, do messages and to be able to get on agreeiably in high school.
>
> [extract]

Janet variously aspired to be a doctor, physiotherapist, social worker, and nurse when she was at school. She indicated that her parents would not be disappointed if she did not go on to the HSC. When asked to write a few sentences about the influence that her father and mother have had on her hopes about education and jobs, she wrote:

> My father and mother have always been interested in my education, and have encouraged me throughout my life to work in school, but not pushing me but just being interested.

In response to the question asked in Grade 9 about good things and problems of school she wrote:

> (a) (good thing) I think relating with kids of your own age and on education that is not pressured as a private school.

> (b) (problem) the systems are sometimes nausiating and there should be more career advice and a better teacher - pupil relationship.

She replied as follows to the question, 'From your school education so far, do you feel that you have achieved anything?':

> Yes, I think I have not only gained a lot of knowledge, but a greater understanding of people and society.
>
> I would not trade my education for anything and believe it a necessity in todays society to have a good education and be pleased with your career.

Her comments on teachers reflect an ambivalent attitude:

> Most teachers are good...it is good when the teachers let you have a bit of leaveway in class and 'do your own thing' but few do...Maths teachers can be highly annoying and why are they almost nausiatingly sarcastic?

Janet left school in August of her Grade 11 year. She gave the following reason for leaving: 'I am moving to Adelaide next year to live with my boy friend and they do a matriculation course in 1 year. So I will finish my education next year.' She said 'slightly no' to the question, 'Would you have liked to stay longer at secondary school?' At the time of her response to the leavers' questionnaire, she was an office worker in a bank.

Her long term aspiration is to be a social worker or a nurse. She hopes to enter one of those occupations after completing the matriculation in South Australia. She said that she needed 'a fair amount more' information about courses and jobs. Janet's replies give no firm indication of why she left school.

Mr and Mrs Jones have four children. Janet is the youngest child and the only daughter. When they were interviewed in Janet's Grade 10 year, they believed that Janet was going remarkably well at school and that she was self-directed and extremely diligent. They expected she would become a social worker after going to university. In response to the question, 'When it comes to deciding what Janet will do, how will the decision be made?', Mrs

Jones stated:

> We would advise and guide her. Unless she chooses something completely ridiculous, it is up to Janet. She is intelligent and sensitive enough to choose something in which she'll be happy.

Gayle Berger, IQ = 133 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium HSC. Gayle was born in New Guinea, her father in England and her mother in Australia. Both Mr and Mrs Berger are teachers.

> School teachers you the co-ordination and working together as a team. Also depending on your attitude it can lead to higher education and a very good career.

[extract]

Angus McPheat, IQ = 105 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high SC and left school. Angus and his parents were born in Australia. Mr McPheat is a maintenance worker and Mrs McPheat is a hospital sister.

> School can affect people in different ways some brainy people always take school good but the average person will take it on or off and lower guys would take it as a goal sentence.
>
> Through our school nearly all the school has been in trouble with police even myself and in a way this school and other treat school kids like grubs sometimes teachers say something about your mother when your mother was in trouble it really boils me up to hit the teacher, and also school is a form of selected subjects and they don't take you through one by one. Getting back to criminals these teachers treat you like a criminal and if you go out of line your dead.

[extract]

Jay Ransome, IQ = 121 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium HSC. Jay and his parents were born in Australia. Mr Ransome is a chartered accountant.

> I speak for every other teenager in the country when I say "School give me the shits".

> School has the affect of producing a very good atmosphere
> for the pushing of "GRASS" and other drugs. This I feel
> is a very worthwhile result of the educational system.
>
> [extract]

When students were asked, 'From your education so far do you feel you have achieved anything?', most replied that they had gained knowledge, and a sizable number said they had engaged in socialising experiences which had given them a greater understanding of life, had improved their own self-development and which would help fit them for life in society. A small number of students indicated that school taught group co-operation, but also encouraged the competitive spirit necessary for individual success in the business or academic world. School discipline was viewed as preparation for taking orders in the workforce (there may be a reflection on the education system in the fact that no one from this State metropolitan high school sample mentioned having received education in the areas of preparation for leadership). Although the question asked about achievement already accomplished, most answers had a future orientation. The case studies seemed to illustrate that most students saw the school experience as offering future rewards rather than present enjoyment and fulfillment - except in the area of peer relationships.

Suggestions for Making School a Better Place to Attend

In this final section of Chapter 3, we look at some suggestions that students have made to improve schooling. In Grade 9 they were asked the question: 'In your opinion, what would make school a better place to attend?'

An overwhelming 2223 suggestions asked for an improvement in lessons (Tables 30, 31). Students called for more excursions, more social activities, more electives, more sport of various kinds, more break times, more individualised instruction, more student involvement in lessons, more free periods, more lessons in sex, health, and drug education, more flexibility in lessons and more lessons in specific subjects. They asked for fewer homework assignments, shorter lessons, decreased compulsion regarding subjects, smaller classes, less emphasis on examinations and less waste of lesson time. Students also requested that improvements should be made in buildings, facilities and grounds (Table 32). Areas mentioned for improvement were: sporting and recreational facilities, the attractiveness and comfort of buildings, classrooms, laboratories, study facilities, library,

TABLE 30

STUDENT SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING SCHOOL A BETTER PLACE TO ATTEND

Summary

Category under discussion in rank order	NC(a)	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Improvement in lesson: content, organisation, assessment	2,223	32
Improvement in: buildings, facilities, grounds	1,511	22
Improvement in teachers	991	14
Improvement in: rules, discipline, punishment	851	12
General suggestions for improvement	801	12
Improvement in: peers, peer relationships	547	8
TOTAL	6,924(b)	100

(a) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

(b) There were 6,924 valid suggestions offered by 2,536 students, i.e. if a particular student made three suggestions these were each recorded opposite the relevant category.

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TABLE 31

STUDENT SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING SCHOOL A BETTER PLACE TO ATTEND

Improvement in lesson: content, organisation, assessment

Suggestions in rank order	NC (a)	% of total suggestions in this area	% of grand total of all suggestions in all areas
Shorter lessons, shorter school day, more holidays, longer break times	342	15	5
More excursions, social events, clubs	299	13	4
More electives, decreased compulsion regarding subjects studied	296	13	4
Less: homework, assignments	172	8	2
More sports of various kinds	155	7	2
More interesting, better, enjoyable lessons	143	6	2
Smaller classes	130	6	2
Less: exams, emphasis upon exams	110	5	2
More lessons in a specific subject: domestic science, commerce, science, maths, geography, craft, engineering, carpentry, electives, English	107	5	2
Lessons which are: practical, job-related	95	4	1
More: individualised instruction, student involvement in lessons	94	4	1
More: free periods, study periods	64	3	1
Better: lesson technique, presentation	59	3	1
Less waste of lesson time, less holidays, less changing of classes	41	2	1
More lessons: in sex, health, drug education	40	2	1
More flexibility in lessons, better scheduling of lessons	33	1	..
Miscellaneous other suggestions	44	2	1
TOTAL	2,223	100	32

(a) NC refers to number of comments.

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TABLE 32

STUDENT SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING SCHOOL A BETTER PLACE TO ATTEND

Improvement in: buildings, facilities, grounds

Comments in rank order	NC (a)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Improvement in: sporting, recreational facilities	531	35	8
General improvement in the: attractiveness, comfort of buildings	305	20	4
Improvement in: classrooms, laboratories, study areas, library, study facilities	256	17	4
Improvement in the school canteen	148	10	2
Improvement in student: toilets, lockers	135	9	2
Improvement in the: appearance, attractiveness of school grounds	104	7	2
Better use of funds for the improvement of facilities, greater availability of use of facilities	32	2	..
TOTAL	1,511	100	22

(a) NC refers to number of comments.

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canteen, toilets and lockers.

A total of 991 comments were made relating to suggestions for improvement in teachers (Table 33). Friendlier, fairer, more helpful and more understanding teachers were called for in 43 per cent of comments. Students also asked for teachers who possess better personalities, less authoritarian teachers, teachers who are able to control classes and who are more interested in their job of teaching. It is interesting to note that there were 17 comments suggesting fewer foreign teachers and 8 comments calling for teachers who are not racially prejudiced.

There were 851 comments which referred to improvements in rules, discipline and punishment (Table 34). Approximately four-fifths of these comments related to the need to relax rules to allow students greater freedom, but students also asked that rules be tightened to control those students who are unruly. Specifically, students asked for a relaxation in playground rules, less caning, less punishment of all because of some, less detention, and a relaxation in rules regarding lining up.

There were other general suggestions for improvement. A total of 570 comments were made about school uniforms. The issue of school uniforms was viewed by some students as being much deeper than the mere wearing of fixed modes of dress. Teenagers see it as an externally imposed rule. It is one of many rules that students have no say in. The uniform rule is clearly and unambiguously defined, and therefore many teachers enforce it in the hope that other less defined discipline areas will be easier to contain. Students who begin to reject the legitimacy of the school may blatantly do this by breaking the uniform rules. Other students called for more interest to be shown in students, for increased student participation in decision-making, for reduced schooling costs and for introduction of student allowances. Finally, there were 424 comments in favour of coeducation. The call for coeducation was a recurring theme in a large number of students' open-ended responses.

Case studies were developed from responses to the essay topic: 'How does school affect teenagers?'

TABLE 33

STUDENT SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING SCHOOL A BETTER PLACE TO ATTEND

Improvement in teachers

Comments in rank order	NC (a)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Friendlier, fairer, more helpful, more understanding teachers	428	43	6
Better teachers, teachers who are more interested in their jobs	187	19	3
Better qualified, more experienced teachers, teachers who are able to control classes	118	12	2
Get rid of teachers	109	11	2
Teachers who possess better personalities	60	6	1
Less authoritarian teachers	50	5	1
Others (b)	39	4	1
TOTAL	991	100	14

(a) NC refers to number of comments.

(b) Included in this category were 17 comments which called for 'less foreign teachers' and 8 comments stating 'teachers who are not racially prejudiced'.

TABLE 34

STUDENT SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING SCHOOL A BETTER PLACE TO ATTEND

Improvement in: rules, discipline, punishment

Comments in rank order	NC (a)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Relax rules (unspecified), allow students greater freedom	447	53	6
Less caning, less punishment, punishment of all because of some, less detention	104	12	2
Relax rules regarding attendance	87	10	1
Tighten rules, discipline/tighten punishment regarding unruly students	79	9	1
Relax playground rules	70	8	1
Relax rules regarding: student duties, lining up, behaviour in corridors, or lockers	37	4	1
Other statements requesting an improvement in rules generally	27	3	..
TOTAL	851	100	12

(a) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

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Marco Kerner, IQ = 96 (low); aspired to do the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low HSC. Marco was born in Australia, Mr Kerner in Germany and Mrs Kerner in Italy. Mr Kerner is an industrial chemist and Mrs Kerner is a secretary. They were interviewed in English.

> At school you are forced to wear the same clothes, which means the school wants everyone to look alike. You are taught to think alike, which takes away peoples individuality. School should promote individuality and not try to make everyone the same. The pupils of the school who do not want their individuality taken away from them are labled as troublemakers, rebels etc.
>
> [extract]

Marco aspired to be a chemist or teacher in Grade 9 and in Grade 11 he said he wanted to work in the field of art. He indicated that both his parents would be disappointed if he did not go on to the HSC. In response to the question on the influence that his father and mother had had on his hopes about education and jobs, Marco stated: 'They want me to continue my education but it is entirely up to me.'

In Grade 9 Marco's response to the question, 'Would you please tell us what you think are good things and what you think are some problems of school', reflected his disenchantment with schooling:

> Some of the good things are the friends you meet. The bad things are mainly teachers and the way that lessons are taught. Some teachers cannot speak English so that the students cannot understand.

He gave the following suggestions to make school a better place to attend. 'Make the lessons intresting and more playing fields. Better teachers. No school uniforms. Better text books. e.g. up to date.' In Grade 10 he gave his views on teachers: 'I find teachers at school to be not interested in pupils as people. They teach them the best way they know how, but without the human side of it'.

Marco said that he had mainly achieved things via his education that won't help a lot and he added, 'I think you should learn things that will be useful.'

Mr and Mrs Kerner have two children. Marco is the youngest and has one older sister. Mr and Mrs Kerner were quite happy with Marco's schooling. 'He got pretty good marks and he seems to be fairly well adjusted with everything.' However, they admitted that if you ask him about school he will say he hates it. Mrs Kerner thought Marco's dislike of school was fairly normal. 'It's the answer that all teenagers give you, you know he says,"Oh yuk", but he has no intentions of leaving school or it wouldn't even cross his mind to leave school.'

Mr and Mrs Kerner have no specific aspirations for Marco's future. They think he would be suited to some professional or technical career but in regard to how the final decision will be made Mrs Kerner pointed out, 'We would probably discuss it all together but the final decision will be his.'

Victor Peterson, IQ = 131 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Victor was born in India and his parents were born in Australia. Mr Peterson is a police medical officer.

> School has a marked effect on teenagers. It is supposed to teach them self-discipline and responsibility, and yet in many cases kids leave school in 5th and 6th form still unable to show initiative. This is partly the fault of classes where they are told exactly the way to do something, instead of having the challenge of finding out for themselves.
>
> School can often become purely a means of getting qualifications for a career, and learning for the sake of learning is disregarded. For the teenager, school becomes just a means towards an end, with no real interest or enthusiasm shown.
>
> [extract]

Bronwen Davies, IQ = 114 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: Bronwen obtained low SC results and left school. Bronwen and her parents were born in Australia. Mr Davies is a technician and Mrs Davies is a part-time cleaner.

> The attitude of the teachers and the heads towards the student means a lot, it may stop trouble between the school and the students or it may start the troubles. If the teenagers are sent to school under harsh and strict conditions they are likely to rebel against this in want of freedom and more respect.

> If the students have a say now and again in the running of the condition of the school then they are going to feel more needed and even think that the teachers and heads realise that they are people, are human and have to be avoided or picked on for all of their school life. Better relationships are needed between teachers and teenagers, less restrictions and more notice taken of the teenagers.
>
> If teachers wasted less time complaining about the school students and more time listening to some of their complaints students wouldn't think of school as a waste of time.
>
> [extract]

Terence Priest, IQ = 123 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Terence and his parents were born in Australia. Mr Priest is a plumbing contractor.

> There's to many bullies at schools. They make going to school most unpleasent. In this case it would be better if all bullies were exspelled and sent to a special school where they can bully other bullies.
>
> [extract]

Natalia Salome, IQ = 112 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Natalia and her parents were born in Lebanon; She arrived in Australia aged 4. Mr Salome is a cleaner and Mrs Salome a caterer.

> I also think school has an effect on the way teenagers feel towards competitiveness. During their school life they are made to feel that failing an exam is attrocious and you must always try for the top marks. This creates a lot of competition between teenagers and there becomes a lot of rivalry.
>
> School exams, even small ones, seem to be trying more to test the students' fast pace and it seems to be like a race against the clock than a test for knowledge. The student feels he must finish the exams and a great deal of teenagers worry about exams. This seems to put a great deal of stress on teenagers.
>
> [extract]

Denise Duffy, IQ = 135 (high); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: high SC and left school. Denise and her parents were born in Australia. Mr Duffy is a car salesman and Mrs Duffy a shop assistant.

> The school affects teenagers in many ways from physical to mental development, or retardation. In many cases students have developed their career interests by 2nd and 3rd form and there isn't enough help for their future, in the schools.

Staying at school 5 days a week, and 6 - 7 hours a day stops a lot of living in the ten to twelve years of school because most students don't get the chance to see what it's really like in the outside world.

I think that in 4th form students should be given a chance to gradually fit into the outside world instead of doing the same as they have done for the past ten years.

If all subjects in school were elective and there was a wider choice it would be a lot more interesting - beneficial to the teenage students of today. We need more subjects on today and what we can expect when we leave school rather than Ancient History and other such subjects.

School affects some students so badly that the boredom and uninterest of the student forces her to drugs or maybe more serious ways to escape the grasp of school.

Other students have more pleasant affects such as enjoying school so much they go on to uni and college and become very educated and respectable.

Teenagers should have a choice of whether or not they want to attend school after 3rd form and maybe if the students had a say in the subjects they could elect it would make a lot of difference to the interest of the teenagers in school.

The basics of life can't really be learnt in school but the teenage students could do with a little encouragement from experienced people, which usually puts teachers out of this because they have been at school most of their life and think they own students so they standover them and make school as enjoyable as a Teddy Bears Picnic during monsoon season in darkest Africa with a peanut butter strike and mouldy hundred and thousands.

[complete essay]

Jane Proud, IQ = 126 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low SC results and left school. Jane and her parents were born in Australia. Mr Proud is a technical officer and Mrs Proud is a computer programmer.

Examination time is very hard on many students. One of my friends, who is very intelligent, when she gets a test paper in front of her, starts to have dizzy spells and she ends not being able to see the paper in front of her. Her nerves are shattered and although she knows all the answers, she is unable to answer the questions, because she loses control, due to fear and nerves.

As far as I'm concerned Co-Ed schools are the best schools for developing and characters in teenagers, the students are able to mix with those of both sexes, helping to prevent

> inhibitions about people of the opposite sex. Quite often you see teenagers from private being very shy or else very forward both showing hangups and fears of those of the opposite sex.
>
> [extract]

To sum up, when students were asked to give suggestions for making school a better place to attend, the majority of suggestions were directed to improvements in lesson content, organisation and assessment. Students called for shorter lessons, more excursions and social events, more electives and decreased compulsion regarding subjects studied, smaller classes, less emphasis on exams, more lessons which are practical and job-related, more individualised instruction, better lesson presentation, more student involvement in lessons, less waste of lesson time and more flexibility in lessons.

In the case studies, students suggested that some schools seemed to encourage learning only as a means of gaining qualifications rather than for its intrinsic value. They suggested that schools needed to encourage individuality and initiative, by challenging students to 'discover' and test hypotheses for themselves, instead of merely presenting them with a lot of boring 'facts'.

Other students asked for a greater integration of school and community so that they could have more knowledge of the world of work before they were forced to make decisions concerning their future in it. They felt that the school needed to provide more help in the area of career counselling. Although some students recognised the role of competition, too much competition was causing fear of failure and damage to the student's self esteem.

Students also stressed the need for better teachers who are friendlier, fairer, more helpful and more understanding. Although students called for less authoritarian teachers they also recognised the need for better qualified, more experienced teachers who are able to control classes. A number of students would like school rules to be relaxed, allowing greater student autonomy and freedom.

Some of the students in the case studies highlight the importance of school climate. They pointed out that an authoritarian school climate encourages students to rebel in an attempt to get a measure of freedom and respect, whereas they argued that if they had a say in the running of their school there would be more harmonious relations and better communication between them and the teaching staff.

Coeducational schools were advocated by some of the students, as they felt that coeducation helped to 'prevent inhibitions about people of the opposite sex'. Improvement in buildings, grounds and related facilities was also requested by students.

Finally, we turn to a discussion of several of the theoretical propositions outlined in Chapter 2. Only the first five propositions are applicable to this chapter; other propositions are discussed in the following two chapters. Our discussion of the propositions is restricted to the comments raised by students. In effect, students are reporters of their education experience and we attempt to analyse the propositions from their viewpoint. The open-ended methodology employed means that students raised only those issues which are important to them. Of course students are by no means objective observers of the education system and many no doubt take for granted many fundamental assumptions of the system. As a prelude to the discussions which follow, we make the assumption that students' comments are, for them, valid perceptions of their school experiences. Our analysis of student comments should be interpreted in the light of these considerations.

We now turn to a discussion of the proposition sets outlined in Chapter 2. The propositions are briefly summarised and student perceptions of the educational experience are reviewed in the light of the perspectives outlined. As the first two proposition sets are interrelated, we shall consider them together.

Propositions

1A School enables students to gain knowledge and develop attitudes and skills necessary for continued self-education:

- students gain knowledge at school via enjoyable and stimulating socialising experiences.
- they experience satisfying relationships with teachers.

- they achieve self-realisation and become self-motivated learners.

- they leave school equipped and motivated to engage in self-education activities.

1B School enables students to gain knowledge but the processes employed lead to student alienation from the school:

- students gain knowledge but the processes employed (e.g. enforcement of inflexible rules and the use of methods of external motivation including the use of corporal punishment) lead students to resent the schooling experience.

- they do not enjoy satisfying relationships with teachers.

- they do not achieve self-realisation nor do they develop those skills and attitudes which are a necessary prerequisite to becoming a self-motivated learner.

- they become alienated both from the school and learning.

2A School is preparation for life:

- school provides students with an appropriate balance of academic and social development experiences.

- teachers strive to assist students to integrate knowledge gained in separate subject areas.

- teachers emphasise the application of studies to the solution of real-life problems.

2B School programs are directed towards the teaching and learning of academic subjects remote from practical real-life problems:

- school programs are geared to a narrow range of academic subjects which can be studied in isolation from the real-life applications.

- school subjects are taught in isolation from each other and teachers do not assist students to integrate the knowledge they have gained.

Comments

Our data allow us to comment on some but not all the elements which constitute propositions 1 and 2. In response to our question on 'good things' and 'problems' of school, over one-third of students commented favourably on the instrumental function of schooling: school provides the opportunity for education, it is enjoyable, it provides an education for the workforce, it develops an understanding of life and people.

Again, the majority of those who commented on lessons made only positive statements. However, about one-fifth of those who responded made only negative comments, e.g. lessons were described as being boring, irrelevant and out of date. From our analysis of interest in school subjects, we decided that although the majority of students were interested in their subjects, the interest was closer to 'lukewarm' than overwhelming acceptance.

The majority of negative comments that students made in response to the question on'good things' and 'problems'was directed towards school rules and discipline, on the one hand, and teachers on the other. Students drew attention to teachers who were over-authoritarian, inconsiderate, unkind, unfair, lazy, uninterested and who teach poorly. But when we asked all students to respond to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', it became apparent that a number of students experienced satsifying relationships with teachers. Teachers were described as: understanding, fair, helpful, friendly, good, reliable and trustworthy. Most students (65 per cent) were unwilling to lump all teachers together in their comments. They made both positive and negative attitude statements about teachers, e.g. 'some are O.K., others are over-authoritarian'.

The vast majority of the students who answered the question, 'From your education so far do you feel you have achieved anything?', indicated that they had achieved a greater knowledge through their schooling experience. On the other hand, approximately 360 reasons were provided by students to explain what they perceived as their lack of achievement. Several specific, positive statements were made by a group of students which are relevant to the propositions under discussion.

(a) Approximately 340 comments were made suggesting that school enables students to achieve a greater understanding of life.

(b) Approximately 310 comments were made suggesting that school teaches students to get on with others.

(c) Approximately 200 comments were made suggesting that school develops such attributes as maturity, self-confidence, responsibility, individuality, and so on.

(d) Approximately 200 comments were made suggesting that school enables students to acquire a knowledge of jobs and their own job prospects.

(e) Approximately 60 comments were made suggesting that school enables students to work practically and do practical things.

In terms of the sample size, the numbers quoted are relatively small but they provide, nevertheless, some support for the 'A' proposition outlined above.

When we analysed the reasons given for leaving school by those who left before the HSC, we identified support for the 'B' propositions. Thirty-nine per cent gave a reason related to dissatisfaction with teachers and/or school as their only reason for leaving, while an additional 20 per cent gave this reason in conjunction with another reason such as 'to obtain work'. Approximately 200 students said that school work was irrelevant to their chosen career and a waste of time if not going on to tertiary studies.

Case studies revealed that higher IQ students tended to be most perceptive of faults, anomalies and contradictions in the system, whereas the lower IQ students tended more to accept the system. There is also some evidence to suggest that lower SES students are less critical of school discipline.

A number of case studies starkly reveal that some students are deeply alienated from schooling and often those whose critical faculties have been best developed are the very ones who expressed the greatest alienation from the school.

Some students appreciate that school has been beneficial in preparing them for life while others would like to see more practical job-related subjects. Students seem to be more concerned with problems within the school system, e.g. pressure of examinations, unfair school rules, poor teaching methods, problems of relationships with teachers, than with the content of schooling. But this is understandable when we take into account the fact that students in our study are commenting on a school system which they largely take for granted.

If we wish to express concern for students it is possible that those who cheerfully accept in an unquestioning manner what the school dishes out should receive our close attention. Some students clearly leave school to escape an unpleasant situation. Others leave school to take up work or a combination of work and further related education studies. Of those who remain in school, there are some who are most critical while others are passively accepting.

There is no simple relationship between attitudes to school on the one hand, and attitudes and skills necessary for continued self-education on the other. For some, negative attitudes to school may be associated with rejection of education per se. For others, negative attitudes to school may reflect a growing maturity and a realisation of what they want out of life.

Propositions

3A School enables students to gain realistic perceptions of the world of work including their own occupational potential:

- students experience the workplace and interact with workers.
- they are provided with comprehensive career information.
- they are provided with adequate counselling in respect to alternative educational paths and matching self and occupations.
- they are given practical experience in job selection procedures.
- teachers have realistic perceptions of the world of work.

3B School does not assist students to gain realistic perceptions of the world of work nor does it assist them to develop an understanding of their own occupational potential:

- students are excluded from mainstream activities in the institutions in society including the workplace.
- they are not provided with comprehensive career information.
- they are not provided with adequate counselling in respect to alternative educational paths and matching self and occuaptions.
- they are not given practical experience in job selection procedures.
- teachers are isolated from the world of work.

Comments

It is fairly clear from the data that proposition 3B best describes the school experience. Less than one-third of students rate teachers and high school career advisers as being very helpful sources of occupational information, and a high proportion of students overall feel that they need either a fair amount or a lot more information about jobs and courses open to them. The majority of students do not believe that the school assists them to gain realistic perceptions of the world of work nor does it assist them to develop an understanding of their own occupational potential.

Propositions

4A School teaches students to work co-operatively:

- students learn how to work co-operatively with others.
- they share resources and ideas with fellow students.

4B School does not teach students to work co-operatively:

- students do not learn to work co-operatively with others.
- they place an over-emphasis on competition with fellow students.
- they do not share resources and ideas with fellow students.

Comments

The fact that school provides opportunities for students to engage in numerous, mutually rewarding experiences with their peers, including making friends and helping one another, was referred to in most positive terms by students. But about 5 per cent of students indicated that friends can also have a bad influence when they interfere with those who wish to work and show lack of consideration for others including bullying.

Certainly many students claimed that a positive effect of school was that they were able to meet others, learn how to get along with them, and share problems. But we are left with the impression that this most positive experience occurred accidentally and in an unplanned way rather than as the result of any school policy.

Many students commented on excessive homework, assignments and examinations. They complained that the pressures and tensions which often result, interrupt their leisure activities and, in particular, interfere with the development of peer relationships. In Grade 9 we asked students what might stop them from getting the education or job they aspired to enter. There were 1287 students who responded to this question and the vast majority mentioned factors related to 'student personal limitations' including such aspects as: inadequate education, inadequate ability, indecision about course selection, inability to get into course quotas, and inadequate application to study.

About 500 referred to the limited number of job vacancies and the competition for jobs.

Further, the review of reasons why students left school revealed that many of them were concerned that schoolwork was too hard, that the pressure was too great, and that they were not smart enough.

It seems that in a number of areas, but mainly those that are non-academic, the school acts as a catalyst to facilitate co-operation among students. But these processes appear to operate in spite of school policies rather than because of them. Students commented on undue stress caused by homework, assignments, and examination pressures: thus students are in an ambivalent position in that they are striving to develop satisfying social relationships with their peers, while at the same time they are in serious competition with them in the areas of school performance and job selection.

Propositions

5A School facilitates the development of young people into mature, responsible, autonomous adults:

- students learn to manage their own affairs and to develop decision-making skills and to take responsibility for the welfare of others.
- they experience interactions with others from a cross-section of age groups, social class groups and ethnic groups.

- they accept self-responsibility for their own work and behaviour.
- they achieve self-esteem.

5B School retards the development of young people into mature, responsible, autonomous adults:

- students are powerless in the school setting.
- they do not learn to manage their own affairs, to develop decision-making skills and to take responsibility for the welfare of others.
- they are provided with only limited opportunities to interact with others from a cross-section of age groups, social class groups and ethnic groups.
- they are not stimulated to accept self-responsibility for their own work and behaviour
- they do not gain self-esteem.

Comments

Only small segments of the data concerned with students' perceptions impinge directly on these propositions. When we asked students to report on their perceptions of the 'problems of teenagers', over half the 'problems' raised were concerned with the 'development of personal independence' and 'getting on with parents'. Certainly, these areas were of central importance to students in the survey.

When we asked students to respond to the question, 'From your education so far do you feel you have achieved anything?', only 4 per cent of the responses referred to such issues as the development of maturity, self-confidence and responsibility. On the other hand, when students were asked for suggestions to make school a better place to attend, there were a total of 18 per cent of responses which referred to such issues as: improvement in rules and discipline, more electives and decreased compulsion regarding subjects studied, more flexibility in lessons and less authoritarian teachers. In the case studies, a number of students indicated that they wanted teachers to treat them with the same respect that they would show other adults. Students were seeking to get a measure of freedom and respect and some say in the running of the school.

It seemed to us that students experience much more autonomy in the home situation regarding major decisions concerning their future than in the school situation, e.g. the vast majority of parents said that the decision to remain in or leave school at the end of Grade 10 is up to the student. Yet in the school context, students are required to give allegiance to rules (some of which they see as petty) that they did not help to formulate. From what we can discern from our data, proposition 5B best describes the current school environment.

CHAPTER 4

PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLING

RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

The literature on parents' participation in schooling reveals that they have little contact with contemporary schools. It appears that their perceptions of schooling are not derived from first-hand experience. Rather, they gain their perceptions second-hand via their children and draw on their own experience as a school student. It is claimed by the authors of an international review on the public's role in educational policy-making that parents have little influence on school policy.

> Whichever view of democracy one favours, it is argued that consumers of education (e.g., students, parents, or employers) are clearly affected by the public schools, but, in recent history, have had almost no opportunity for direct participation...in educational policy-making.
>
> Coombs and Merritt (1977:169)

The Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission (1973:13) sum up the situation in Australia as follows: 'Antipathy towards and apathy about direct community participation in the governance of schooling is widespread throughout Australia.' Several research studies conclude that very few Australian parents indeed regard direct participation in school policy-making either their right or responsibility (Fitzgerald, 1976; Fitzgerald et al., 1976). In a study of the school and neighbourhood in two Victorian rural towns, Musgrave and Wind (1978:183) conclude that among those teachers and parents where interaction occurs, the spirit of the relationship is best described in terms of what has been called the Plowden ideology: 'The good of the student, defined by the school...is accepted by all as the focus for participation.' Parents in the survey saw themselves as having a very restricted role in schooling. They are not experts in academic matters though they have firm views on moral matters. Evidence that is available indicates that Australian teachers are staunchly opposed to any move which could result in teachers becoming accountable to local community authorities (Davy, 1975).

Green's comments on U.K. education are equally applicable to Australia:

> ...a great deal of what we try to do in schools is wasted because we have too little understanding of our pupil's environment. Some of us tend to see the school as an island of culture in a sea of barbarism.
>
> Green (1968:14)

Midwinter puts the onus for change in the U.K. educational system squarely on the school and the teachers:

> Most (not all, but most) parents are vitally concerned about their children's education, and provided the school and the teachers are prepared to adapt the character of their home-school links to the character of the parents' subculture, they will respond diligently.
>
> Midwinter (1977:22)

When Acland looked at research from both the U.K. and the United States on parental attitudes to their child's school, he also found that although parents generally had a good opinion of schools, this was probably based on ignorance, and he placed the blame for this ignorance on the schools:

> This situation might be taken to mean that parents are naturally passive about what happens in school, but it might also mean schools have found ways of limiting parents' involvement in their children's education. Parents have not chosen to be passive; they have been encouraged to be passive. The notion that schools act as monopolies and can control acceptance of their service, in true monopolistic fashion ...
>
> Acland (1975:5)

Fitzgerald et al. sum up the situtation in Australia:

> Parents do not expect to assist much in schools. Teachers neither expect them to do so nor themselves either expect or aspire to interact closely with parents. Criticism, flowing either way, is tabu. Teachers are experts, not expecting or expected to defer to local lay people. They may heed suggestions or advice...but they will not take orders from outsiders. Parents support this view, students accept it.
>
> Fitzgerald et al. (1976:108)

It is not surprising that four Australian studies have found that a sizable proportion of the public claim that 'nothing' or 'very little' best describes their knowledge of schooling; Botsman and Browne (1977:21) reported that 46 per cent of parents gave one of these responses in their Queensland survey. In a South Australian survey Dunne (1978:21) reported that 51 per cent of parents gave one of these responses. The New South Wales study by Baumgart et al. (1979) also concluded that a high proportion of people are not well informed about school. Marjoribanks (1980:85) commented that, 'perhaps the major implication of the analysis [of parental satisfaction with school and teachers] is that parents need much more information about their child's schooling before they are able to make critical judgment'.

In a Sydney survey of parental involvement in schools involving 1489 families, King and Watson (1976) found that 58 per cent of the sample responded 'yes' to the statement that 'Parents should be more involved.' King and Watson (1976:42) also found that open-ended comments made by 30 per cent of the respondents could be classified into three main areas:

1. 'Education is a government responsibility.'
   The general feeling of those parents making this comment was that they were already paying high taxes for education and should therefore not be required to spend their time, energy and money helping the local school.

2. 'Parental involvement amounts to interference.'
   Education is seen strictly as the domain of qualified professionals. Individual reasons for leaving teaching to the teachers included:

(a) children need to be away from their parents;
(b) the presence of parents would undermine the teacher's status, introduce bias or bring pressure on the teachers;
(c) most parents are incompetent;
(d) most parents do not have time to assist in the classroom;
(e) the enthusiasm and reliability of voluntary labour rapidly wanes and is unreliable;
(f) mothers should spend less time with school committees and more time at home to avoid the breakdown of family

relationships.

3. 'Teaching is a specialist professional activity but parents could complement the work of teachers.'

The arguments for and against community involvement are summarised by the Report of the Review Panel appointed by the New South Wales Minister for Education (1974). Major objections are:

(a) greater influence by members of the community will lead to a deterioration in the standard of education;
(b) minority groups with vested interests will exert a disproportional influence on school policy which will not have the support of the majority of parents;
(c) local community groups will be ultra-conservative and hinder educational innovations;
(d) unqualified people in the school will endanger the quality of education by impinging on the primacy of the teacher.

Arguments for increased school-community involvement are:

(a) as teachers function on behalf of society as a whole they should make contact with a wide base of community opinion. They are presently relatively insulated;
(b) parent contact with the school is currently very limited and many contacts come only in response to difficulties. Therefore, although the teacher is insulated from 'interference' by parents, he is, conversely, unable to have a great deal of influence on parents;
(c) parents are also teachers. Isolation of parents from the school may generate in the child a distrust, anxiety or over-hostility to school. Conversely, if parents become partners in education they could reinforce what is learnt at school and become allies of the teacher;
(d) the school can serve as one focus of attention in the development of a sense of community identity.
(e) the use of community resources can be extended in two ways:

(i) the community will benefit by being able to make wider use of the physical facilities of school;

(ii) the school will benefit by being able to call on the abilities of citizens in the community;

(f) the public has the right to hold teachers accountable for their actions and it is important to bring this accountability closer to the community;

(g) through closer community involvement administrators at all levels will be made aware of the needs of communities and schools.

Fitzgerald also found in his Victorian survey that the parents favoured high levels of school-community use of school facilities (Fitzgerald; 1976).

The innovations to improve school-community relationships that were presented by the Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission (1973) have not resulted in sweeping changes. Educational planners have failed to take into account public opinion on this issue. In their 1975 report, the Schools Commission (1975:160) presented a more realistic picture: 'The Commission acknowledges that after one hundred years of isolation of the school from its community, a closer relationship may lead to some tension among teachers, parents and students.'

In their most recent report, the Schools Commission (1978) drew attention to issues and problems such as: boundary problems in the demarcation of power and responsibility between those involved in education; the need for the building of effective mechanisms to ensure that all parents and teachers have the opportunity to participate; and the problem that, in deprived areas, increased responsiveness to local circumstances could lock students into limited perceptions of options and into achievement measures which have no currency beyond limited circumstances.

Recent research into the area of community involvement in education provides a good basis from which to analyse the perceptions that parents in our study have of the schooling experience. The meanings and interpretations of reality which many parents place on school-community relationships can be explained, in many instances, by tracing through historical trends in the school-community relationships. In the main, both parents and teachers support what could be termed a 'limited community participation' model of school government where the community members have the opportunity to contribute to decisions on non-educational matters only. Are we likely to see changes in the present situation in the future? Cohen (1970) reported the findings of overseas research which indicated that teachers are less keen than parents to allow the school's boundary to become more permeable.

Campbell (1975) acknowledged the reluctance of many teachers to involve parents in programs but stressed that the segregation of the school and the community is so disadvantageous to both parents and teachers that some form of joint involvement is essential. Campbell placed his hopes on a gradual evolutionary process:

> ...in the initial stages, the major decision-making will rest with the teachers in the schools, but it is anticipated that, as confidences grow on both sides, parents and others will play an increasingly influential role, until something like a genuine partnership emerges.
>
> Campbell (1975:64)

Perhaps Campbell is overly optimistic if stimulus from teachers is a necessary concomitant of change.

While the research findings on parental involvement in education provide dismal reading for those who work to foster and improve school-community interaction, it should not be concluded that all teachers and parents adopt a non-involvement stance towards important aspects of schooling. Fitzgerald et al. (1976:183) noted that the minority of parents who desire to change the status quo deserve some notice: 'Some teachers and parents do want to link school and home in a different way or, for example, wish to have a different curriculum in their child's school.'

In a recent New South Wales study, Baumgart et al. (1979:54) concluded that '...there was a fairly solid majority of opinion that involvement by the community and by students in school policy making was at least moderately important'. In a survey of parents in Victoria, Fitzgerald (1976) found that over three-quarters of parents surveyed favoured increased community use of schools. Thus there are signs that some parents are becoming aware of the advantages of parent involvement in education. For example, Kirner argued convincingly for a partnership approach to school government:

> If we as parents have a right to protect our child's interests in the school, we also have a responsibility to know our child, to share our knowledge with the school, to try and understand the relationship between the child and the learning process, and to ensure that the process is related to the needs of the child.
>
> If we as parents have a right to participate in the control of education, then we have an equal responsibility to communicate with all the participants - the administration, the teachers, the student and the community. Real and effective communication cannot be achieved unless all are partners in school government.
>
> Kirner (1973:20)

Bassett et al. provided guidelines relating to home and community influences on schooling and suggested implementation of the following practical measures:

> 1. Explicit recognition of the importance of home-school cooperation and communication of it to students and parents.
> 2. Making the school program familiar to parents.
> 3. Communicating with parents regarding their children's progress.
> 4. Improving understanding of individual children through knowledge of their home background.
>
> Bassett et al. (1978:129)

Tinney pointed out the importance of ensuring informed family involvement in the decisions which the student must make during his time at school:

> A community education program describing the content and aims of schooling plus more direct efforts to inform and involve parents with children already at school is imperative. Without such a program, children will continue to be forced to take much of the responsibility for the choice of school and subjects, as well as for their future vocation, they will continue to have little assistance from those who matter most - their family.
>
> Tinney et al. (1974:60)

The literature on the participation of migrant parents in the schooling process is very sparse indeed. If the general literature reviewed above is any indication, there are few immigrant parents who are likely to have much involvement with the school, especially because, as Bassett et al. (1978:129) pointed out, many migrant parents '...lack confidence about approaching the school either because of their different traditions in relation to the school, or through a sense of cultural inferiority'. With reference to the period prior to 1970, Martin, (1976:1-2) described Australia's response to the large and diverse migrant intake of the 50's and 60's as follows: 'Political leaders shared with Commonwealth and State bureaucracies, and with non-government organisations...an overall indifference to the migrant presence.'

Martin pointed out that education administrators acted as a brake on changes ensuing from the influx of non-English-speaking children into schools. She also commented on the role played by teacher-educators:

> Teacher education bodies have in general put up a strong resistance against changing their programs in response to the ethnic diversity of schools or concepts of multicultural education, and their resistance has been the easier to sustain because they are to a considerable degree isolated from productive contact with schools curriculum developers or community groups.
>
> Martin (1978:135-6)

The development of multicultural educational curricula in schools was one of the major recommendations of the Galbally Report, issued by the Australian Government Commission into the post-arrival programs and services provided for immigrants to Australia. The Commissioners stated that:

> ...our schools and school systems should be encouraged to develop more rapidly various initiatives aimed at improving the understanding of the different histories, cultures, languages and attitudes of those who make up our society. This greater understanding can be achieved in a range of ways - for example through greater allocation of resources to the teaching of histories, cultures and languages (both English and other languages), through development of bilingual teaching, through better teacher education in these fields, both before and during teachers' active careers, through development of curriculums and essential materials and through greater involvement of parents and the community.
>
> Galbally Report (1978:106)

However, there are few indications at this stage that the change of emphasis by political parties and government bureaucracies in the 1970's away from assimilation and towards integration and the notion of multiculturalism, has filtered through to the schools.

As migrant parents begin to make contact with schools, cultural differences are highlighted. The Schools Commission draws our attention to the fact that for many immigrant parents:

> School was a place where discipline was harsh and exacting and where student-teacher relationships were marked by remoteness, and formalised through discipline and punishment. This is the kind of school the parents knew themselves as students and they tend to expect that schools will continue to be the same. It is important to note that this is not an expectation confined to parents from ethnic communities.
>
> Schools Commission (1979:36)

Martin (1978:140) stated that even in school situations that are 'traditional', 'The expectations of some ethnic parents that schools should exercise custodial functions and mirror the authoritarian structure of the family are disappointed.' However, if immigrant parents came to Australia for reasons that are predominantly associated with improving life chances for their children, and they perceive the education system as the medium for this hoped for social mobility for their children, it is likely that many will 'turn a blind eye' to grating cultural differences and support what the schools are doing.

The related research studies, then, provide a backdrop for the analyses which follow.

METHODOLOGY

The Interview

We analysed parents' perceptions of schooling by utilising data from the interview program. The interview sub-sample was selected from the total sample as follows: stratification was based on parents' country of birth, sex of student and socio-economic status of father. Proportional sampling was used except where cell numbers were five or less, in which case all parents represented by the cell were interviewed. The distribution of the interview sample by parents' country of birth is as follows:

	Parents' Country of Birth	N
(a)	Both Australian	244
(b)	Both GreeR	47
(c)	Both Italian	52
(d)	Both Lebanese	39
(e)	Both Maltese	27
(f)	Both Yugoslav	45
(g)	Another non-English-speaking country (both same)	91
(h)	Another or different English-speaking countries	56
(i)	Different non-English-speaking countries	58
(j)	One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking	31

The total sample actually interviewed was 690, made up of 334 families of boys in the study and 356 families of girls in the study. The 690 parents interviewed represent 88 per cent of those approached for interview (786).

The interview schedule required that both parents be present at the interview. Interviews were tape-recorded and the complete conversations were typed by audio-typists. When one or both parents could not take part in the interview because of lack of knowledge of English, a foreign-language interviewer was engaged. The full text of interviews conducted in a foreign language was translated into English.

Interviewers were orientated to the schedule via a training program which utilised the following procedures: viewing of a TV model interview prepared specially for this interview, attending seminars on the project schedule, role-playing with audio-visual play back and encouragement to develop skills of self-evaluation, the conducting of a trial interview, and continual monitoring of taped interviews, with corrective feedback as required.

The questions used in this part of the project are listed in Appendix C. Relevant sections of the interview guide are also listed. Questions in the schedule are of two kinds: 'factual' and 'attitudinal'. They are also classified 'B', which means 'obtain information about both parents' or 'ask both parents' and 'E', which means 'ask either parent'. In several cases the interview tape-recordings were unable to be typed owing to low volume. In the final analysis we coded the response of 666 parents. The numbers shown above represent the maximum possible in each ethnic group.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Parents' Comments about Their Desires for Involvement in Secondary Education

Of the 666 parents in the analyses (Tables 35A, 35B) there are 124 (19 per cent) only who wish to be involved in secondary education. Parents who did not wish to be involved gave a number of reasons: lack of time, they feel they are too old or incapable, parents' involvement would be resented by the school, and education is best left to teachers. Almost one-fifth of parents born in NES countries said that involvement was impossible owing to language problems.

Among the parents born in NES countries (Table 35B) there were variations in the proportions of parents who desired involvement. Only 6 per cent of Italian parents desired involvement compared with 22 per cent of Greek parents and 29 per cent of Lebanese. Thirty per cent of Italian parents and 26 per cent of Greek parents said that they considered involvement impossible owing to language difficulties. In comparison, only 2 per cent of parents from

TABLE 35A

PARENTS' COMMENTS ABOUT THEIR DESIRES FOR INVOLVEMENT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

All parents in interview sample

Comments	Total sample		Parents' Country of Birth							
			Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parents wished to be involved, saw the value of involvement	124	19	46	20	64	18	9	17	5	16
Parents did not wish to be involved, barriers prevent involvement										
Desired no involvement, involvement considered impossible owing to lack of time, inconvenience	199	30	81	34	88	25	19	36	11	35
Involvement considered impossible as parents felt: they are not capable, they are too old, best left to teachers	174	26	72	31	77	22	15	29	10	32
Involvement considered impossible owing to language	63(a)	9	..	..	62	18	..	..	1	3
Saw involvement in terms of helping their own child	50	8	15	6	31	9	4	8	..	..
Felt that: help from the outside would be a waste, secondary school is too impersonal to make involvement possible	20	3	9	4	5	1	3	6	3	10
Sub-total	506	(76)	177	(75)	263	(76)	41	(79)	25	(81)
No comment offered	36	5	12	5	21	6	2	4	1	3
TOTAL	666	100	235	100	348	100	52	100	31	100

(a) In 9 cases, the additional comment 'lack of time' was made, in 9 cases the additional comments 'incapable, too old' were offered and in 3 cases the additional comments made were 'incapable, too old and no time'.

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TABLE 36B

PARENTS' COMMENTS ABOUT THEIR DESIRES FOR INVOLVEMENT IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

Both parents born in non-English-speaking countries

Comments in rank order	Parents' Country of Birth															
	Both non-English-speaking countries		Both Greek		Both Italian		Both Lebanese		Both Maltese		Both Yugoslav		Another non-English-speaking country (both same)		Different non-English-speaking country	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parents wished to be involved, saw the value of involvement	64	18	10	22	3	6	11	29	3	11	11	24	16	18	11	19
Parents did not wish to be involved, barriers prevent involvement																
Desired no involvement, involvement considered impossible owing to lack of time, inconvenience	88	25	9	20	14	28	4	11	14	52	8	18	23	27	16	28
Involvement considered impossible as parents felt: they are not capable, they are too old, best left to teachers	77	22	7	15	11	22	10	26	4	15	8	18	17	20	20	35
Involvement considered impossible owing to language	62	18	12	26	15	30	9	24	1	4	8	18	16	19	1	2
Saw involvement in terms of helping their own child	31	9	4	9	3	6	2	5	2	7	5	11	7	8	8	14
Felt that: help from the outside would be a waste, secondary school is too impersonal to make involvement possible	5	1	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	4	2	2	..	..
Sub-total	263	(76)	33	(72)	43	(86)	25	(66)	21	(78)	31	(69)	65	(76)	45	(79)
No comment offered	21	6	3	7	4	8	2	5	3	11	3	7	5	6	1	2
TOTAL	348	100	46	100	50	100	38	100	27	100	45	100	86	100	57	100

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different non-English-speaking countries and 4 per cent of Maltese parents gave language difficulties as a reason for non-attendance.

We cross-tabulated parents' responses from the total sample (Table 35A) with higher/lower socio-economic status (SES). The proportion of both SES groups (higher SES/lower SES) who desired to be involved is approximately the same (19 per cent). Overall, 12 per cent of parents desired no involvement because education is best left to teachers. It is interesting to note that a larger proportion of the higher SES parents (17 per cent) supported the idea that education should be left to teachers than the lower SES group (10 per cent).

Most parents were initially startled by the question: 'Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education?' It was a notion quite alien to them. The case studies portray the reactions of many: 'What do you mean by involvement?', 'I don't think I understand, you mean not through the P and C ?' The parents in this sample gave the message loud and clear - most do not wish to be involved in secondary education.

Several case studies were developed from parent interviews. Fictitious names are used throughout and the following abbreviations are adopted: Int = Interviewer; Mo = Mother; Fr = Father. Some notion of student attitudes can be obtained from the supplementary data added to the parent interviews from the student questionnaires. Other topics in addition to desire for involvement in secondary education are mentioned in the case studies. References will be made to these issues later in the chapter.

Mr and Mrs Renoir, daughter Suzette

Mr and Mrs Renoir were both born in Egypt (of British and French parentage). They came to Australia in 1949. Mr Renoir left school at 18 years of age; Mrs Renoir at 17 years of age. Mr Renoir is an accountant (but holds no qualifications); Mrs Renoir is a secretary and is a licensed real estate agent. Mr and Mrs Renoir have two children.

Suzette; IQ = 109 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or

Grade 10; school accreditation: low HSC. Suzette was born in Australia.

Note: The interview was conducted in English.

Int	Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education?
Fr	I can't think of any ways. The only reason I was involved for a few years was when I was treasurer for the P and C.
Int	Do you think this is sufficient involvement?
Mo	What do you mean by involvement?
Int	I was really trying to think what you meant by involvement. If some people do think that parents should be much more involved in what goes on in school.
Fr	I think we should keep out because I feel that would bring differences of opinion and it should be left to the teaching profession how to educate the children. We can always encourage the child.

In her questionnaire answers, Suzette said that her parents would be disappointed if she failed to complete HSC. In response to the question, 'Please write a few sentences on the influence that your father and mother have had on your hopes about education and jobs', she commented: 'It has influenced me in some ways.' Her comments in response to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', were: 'Some teachers let you express your own views but others believe they are right and not let you have any say in the matter.'

Mr and Mrs Schmitt, daughter Mary

Mr Schmitt was born in Germany and Mrs Schmitt in England. Mr Schmitt came to Australia in 1952 and Mrs Schmitt in 1941. Mr Schmitt left school at 14 years of age; Mrs Schmitt at 17 years of age. Mr Schmitt is an architectural assistant; Mrs Schmitt is an administrative clerk. Mr and Mrs Schmitt have two children.

Mary: IQ = 135 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high HSC. Mary was born in Australia.

Note: The interview was conducted in English.

Int	Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education?
Mo	More involved in this sort of area rather than pure money-raising areas, that's how I've always felt. When I wasn't working I belonged to the Infants' School Mothers' Club and I had a Swiss friend and I said, 'You know, your child's in the kindergarten now, would you like to come along to the parents' and citizens' meeting or mothers' meeting?' 'Oh yes, I'd love to, I'd love to be able to hear the teachers talking about the school and hearing about what goes on in the school', and of course she came along to the meeting there. They have all these notes, oh, you know, minutes of the last meeting, and jumble sale here and a raffle sale there and the cake stall but not talking about the school at all and that does follow true, possibly not as much now as it did. Then, they were a little bit instrumental in getting the head-mistress, at that stage, to give a talk every so often about something to do with the school. She was only too happy to do it, she didn't realize that the parents wanted it, and the meetings when she was giving those talks were full to overflowing. At the ordinary little meetings there's probably 20 to 30 regulars.
Int	In what way, then, would you like to be involved in secondary education? Can you see this sort of set-up that you're talking about as a way of being involved, is that how you'd like to be involved?
Mo	Yes, well, you're involved but...only as far as you are learning to understand the school system more.
Int	You see this as your role?
Mo	What, learning to understand the school system? Well I think it's very important because it's such a complex ever-changing sort of an area. The more information that parents have the better able they are to understand what their children are doing when they are there and they're there in the school for such a large number of hours of their waking time.
Int	How far do you think parents should be involved in school activities?
Mo	Purely advisory only, not involved in policy making at all, wouldn't you say so?
Fr	Oh, yes.
Mo	Because I think there are too many do-gooders who would run schools and they've got really no notion of what they're

playing with, you know? I think teachers all say they're not all parents themselves. If they do have parents' ideas and attitudes to various things it can alter the tone or the emphasis in some areas. But you know, I think we should let teachers run their schools.

Fr Yes, I agree with my wife.

Int What do you think of the P and C ?

Mo I'd better not go into that.

Int Well, do you think they're a useful organisation?

Mo I think it's useful in so far as it raised money for the school but I think that the things that the P and C buy for the school should not necessarily have been bought in that area. They should have been automatically supplied as part of the school process. They should have been supplied by the government, and I've always felt that it's a very unfair way of distributing goods to schools because if you're in a fairly low social or economic area you've got virtually nothing, because the parents are not interested in the school. If you're fortunate enough to live in an area like North Shore where everybody, or a large proportion of the people, are interested in their children and their welfare and they've got enough money and interest to put that to the betterment of the school, then those children are far more advantaged, purely by the parents and where they live than they should be.

Int So you see it as an important body do you? You think the government should be supplying some of the equipment but you know if that's not the rule, then you see the P and C as having an important role today?

Mo Yes, providing you've got interested parents, which in our school we have. We're fairly lucky that we have got a fairly interested P and C.

Int Do you attend meetings regularly?

Mo No, not regularly.

Fr No, unfortunately, my time has been very limited.

Int Would you go to one meeting a year?

Mo That would be about my limit unfortunately.

Mary indicated in her questionnaire answers that her parents would be disappointed if she did not complete HSC. In response to the question, 'Please write a few sentences on the influence that your father and mother have had on your hopes about education and jobs', Mary commented: 'They have helped me with finding out what requirements I need, and have told me that it is completely my choice. If I want to be a cleaner I can. If I want to be a Prime Minister I can.' In response to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', she said:

> Some are good, some are alright and some are dreadful. It depends on the department e.g. Maths Department are willing to help, but also they always give you homework. Teachers do not realise that there are other subjects too and just pile the work up and up. They think their subject is the most important e.g., Commerce, Geography and Maths.

Mr and Mrs Francis, son Mike

Mr and Mrs Francis were both born in Australia. They both left school at 16 years of age. Mr Francis is an administrative manager and holds a certificate in management; Mrs Francis is a cashier and holds a certificate in dressmaking. They have three children.

Mike; IQ = 132 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: high SC and left school.

Int Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education?

Fr On what side, on the learning or the teaching?

Int What do you mean on the learning?

Fr Well you say like to be be involved...

Int Involved with the school, to be involved in school activities. Are there any ways in which you'd like to be involved in school activities in the high school?

Fr That's a question that would depend on our own abilities, how our abilities could be applied to assisting in an education area.

Mo I don't think I understand, you mean not through the P and C ?

Int Well the P and C is one way, but are there any other ways in which you would like to...

Mo I can't sort of think of any other ways that are available.

Int You feel that this is something that should belong - that should be - in the teachers field more or less.

Mo Are you referring to - you know - they have those parent committees to discuss what should be happening in the school?

Int Yes, do you feel you should have a say in how the school is run or not?

Mo Well, not any more than...I think that if there is something in the running of the school that you object to you could go along and say this at the P and C meeting and it would be noted - it wouldn't be just ignored - but I think that you need a lot of special qualifications to have anything to do with the high school and the running of it, and I don't think I know enough about it.

Int Do you agree with that (to Fr)?

Fr I go back to what I said before, I don't think we would have anything to offer the school and I'm not in that area that's not already been provided.

Int What do you think of teachers at the school?

Mo Well really I don't know very many of them.

Fr Those we have been associated with we considered to be quite satisfactory. They seem to be on good terms with the majority of the students.

Mo I think in our position - Mike's much younger as you can see there than his brothers and sister - we were perhaps more involved with the other two in the schooling, but at this time of our life, well, Mr Francis of course is working and I'm working and possibly it's just, you know, there isn't time. Also, unless you have a very specific thing to discuss at the school they don't encourage you to just go up and have a talk about things, unless...

Int They don't encourage you to come up and chat?

Mo No, they say if you have a specific problem you can ring and make an appointment otherwise they haven't got time.

Int You can't just sort of go along and say how's Mike getting on at school, you must have a pretty good reason?

Mo You know, even in Education Week they have a program for first year but otherwise they particularly ask you not to come, not to make an appointment to see one of the teachers unless you've got something to talk about.

Int You can't just make an appointment just to discuss Mike's progress in general, even though he may not have a particular problem?

Mo Well, no. You would only be able to do that with his form master who really I have spoken to and sort of only know in general terms, because he doesn't teach him every subject - well it's like that with high school isn't it?

Mike's questionnaire answers indicated that his parents would be disappointed if he did not complete the HSC. However, in response to the question, 'Please write a few sentences on the influence that your father and mother have had on your hopes about education and jobs', he commented: 'Not much. They believe in letting me make the choice.'

Mike's comments about school and teachers show that he was not of the same opinion as his parents. In response to the question, 'In your opinion what would make school a better place to attend?', he commented: 'Get rid of the routine don't have everybody doing the same thing at the same time. Get rid of standard hours.' A year later in Grade 10, commenting on teachers at his school, he said that they were: '...pretty slack as a whole, Old-fashioned, archaic'. In Grade 11, Mike stated that he was 'highly dissatisfied' with his level of achievement and he gave the response 'strongly disagree' to the statement, 'I look forward to coming to school each day.' Mike left school before completing the HSC.

Mr and Mrs Perignon, daughter Anna

Mr and Mrs Perignon were born in France. They came to Australia in 1951/1952. Mr Perignon left school at 14 years of age; Mrs Perignon left school at 18 years of age. Mr Perignon is a carpenter-joiner and holds a trade certificate. Mr and Mrs Perignon have two children.

Anna; IQ = 91 (low); did not aspire to HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school. Anna was born in Australia.

Note: The interview was conducted in English.

Int Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education?

Fr I don't know, I think we need secondary education. For us parents from another country it is a bit hard. Maybe it's a complex that I have always to think that. We went along to the cubs a couple of times, they make you welcome, but they seem to be mates, put it that way, and they say everything is alright. You might be there listening but you don't seem to be dragged in - you feel you want to let them do it. It seems all right what they say, you are not really active. You are there but you are not active as you should be. I feel if I was in my own country and I went along I would open my mouth more than I do here.

Int If you are not made to feel welcome you don't get involved?

Mo That's right, even in the street, you know. I know a lot of people; I have to stand at their gate but never go in. They say hello or they are in a hurry or they stand talking to someone else. I see them talk together for hours.

Fr Everywhere it is the same.

Int What do you think of the P and C ?

Mo Not enough people going.

Fr I suppose it is a good thing if you are able to go up there and chat and compare your own views with the others.

Int You think it could help you?

Fr It might help in the sense you could see better what the children need.

Mo I used to go but you may not believe, newcomer goes on one side and Australian on the other side. I couldn't discuss about things.

Int Did you feel unwelcome?

Mo Yes.

Fr Its pretty hard to explain those things. Its always the attraction to two Australian person together because they have perhaps more in common. You might not find it, maybe we are wrong, we may not mix enough, I don't know. I tell you frankly we are pretty independent, we wouldn't interfere with anybody in the street for that matter. We have our own life, we have our own views. You don't impose on anybody. Perhaps that could be a factor.

Mo We were very keen of course and we were doing parties with a cup of tea and cakes for 2 hours, I told that to the president and she said to me, 'We don't need to go to your place.'

Mr and Mrs O'Connell, son John

Mr and Mrs O'Connell were both born in Australia. Mr O'Connell left school at 14 years of age. Mrs O'Connell at 15 years of age. Mr O'Connell is a station foreman; Mrs O'Connell is a school cleaner. Mr and Mrs O'Connell have three children.

John; IQ = 123 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school.

Int	Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education?
Fr	Quite a few. I think if we could, because I suppose when you've got a school with a thousand kids it's pretty hard; but I think that they should have more smaller groups instead of an overall group of parents going up like a large body. It becomes very hard, and they just give an overall picture; but if it was new, of course, this is going to take up teachers time and they mightn't be too keen on that. But if you could go up in a smaller group - a more - you know what I mean - more individual and you can start talking to say 3 or 4 parents.
Mo	The whole of 4th form. You said a group.
Fr	Not as a whole. Perhaps a class, - this class could be discussed and...
Mo	You see they're not all in the one class, Johnny's in one, Ann's in one.
Fr	Well, there must be something they could,...
Mo	Talk about it.
Fr	Yes - and then perhaps suggestions. You say the P and C, I've given up on the P and C. They're a lot of busy bodies. You're talking about the academic side of school are you? Yes, well I think that parents should be more involved, those that want to be involved, I would for one, you know. I would like to be able to talk to them, the teachers, and discuss the teachers or perhaps my child and give them my views on what I think would benefit him, and how I think they could most probably get the best out of him.
Int	What you're doing now?
Fr	Well this is exactly what I feel, you can't do this. I've been to them religiously and it's very hard for a teacher, some teachers, when there's a great group of people all wanting to talk about their kids, (which everyone does, you know), and the

most that they can tell you is, 'Oh well Johnny's not doing too bad, he can do better.' But we know this because this is on the report so it's useless for us to go up there; and you can't blame the teacher because they've got a great trail of people waiting to talk about their children. When you're going to do this I don't know. If they have some sort of a special select group at each high school especially they could hire...where you can go up at certain times and talk to your teacher and they can present the papers, show his work - you know, - and where he's going wrong. I always say you may be able to help them improve the child by telling his coach, cause you should know them better than anyone. Whether it would ever work I don't know.

Int	That's what you'd like to do?

Fr	Yes I'd like it to be more personalised. It's too distant. Everyone comes up, you know, and they make a cup of tea and all this. That's so much nonsense - a cup of tea and biscuits. That's irrelevant completely, and there's a great group of people and everyone marches around the school and they walk in and out of rooms, you know, and you see absolutely nothing. But your protocol's been - like we've done this like everyone. Everyone went through the rooms, we've done our part. I don't say this is their attitude, but this is the way it strikes me and it seems to me to be like you just don't learn what's going on.

In his questionnaire answers Johnny revealed that he felt his parents would be disappointed if he did not stay on at school until the HSC. In response to the question, 'Please write a few sentences on the influence that your father and mother have had on your hopes about education and jobs', he commented: 'They have asked me to do well and try, they get me anything I want. They help with homework.'

Johnny's comments about schooling also reflected some of the disenchantment evident in his parents' responses. In Grade 9 he commented, 'I hate school because its weak' and suggested that what would make school a better place to attend would be 'a bomb'. In Grade 10, however, he did indicate that his attitude to school had mellowed. In response to the question 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', he commented: 'Most of them are pretty good. Except for a few who think they are better than us and think their big by bossing teenagers around.'

Mr and Mrs Comino, daughter Peta

Mr and Mrs Comino were born in Greece. Mr Comino arrived in Australia in 1955 and Mrs Comino in 1957. Mr Comino attended school only between the ages of 13 to 15 years and Mrs Comino had very irregular attendance at school which she left when aged 13 years. Mr Comino is a factory worker. Mr and Mrs Comino have four children. Peta was born in Australia.

Details of Peta's background and other information relating to the Comino family are given in Chapter 3, page 127.

Note: The interview was conducted in Greek and translated.

Int Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education?

Fr I can't say that I would not like to. But we come back to the language barrier. How can I involve myself? I would like to go and speak to a teacher. School should not be independent from the home. In Greece, we would be in contact with the teachers.

Int What do you think of the P and C ?

Fr I have not heard of it.

Int Have you been to Peta's school or had any other contacts with the school this year?

Fr None.

Int (Apart from what you have just told me), since Peta first began secondary school, has the headmaster or any of the teachers ever contacted you to discuss her progress, courses or anything else?

Fr None.

Mr and Mrs Hrdlicka, daughter Myrna

Mr and Mrs Hrdlicka were born in Yugoslavia. They came to Australia in 1949. Mr Hrdlicka completed secondary school and studied mechanical engineering at a technical college; Mrs Hrdlicka left school at the age of 12 years. Mr Hrdlicka was a chief inspector of engineers and was retired at the time of the interview. Mrs Hrdlicka is a housewife. Mr and Mrs Hrdlicka have three children. Their daughter Myrna was born in Australia.

Details of Myrna's background and other information relating to the Hrdlicka family are given in Chapter 3 page 62.

Note: The interview was conducted in the ethnic language and translated.

Int Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education?

Fr I am involved by going to the P and C meetings. I don't particularly like the education system - good students are favoured while bad students are immediately thrown aside - that's not fair. If they are good students it doesn't mean that they will be good people later.

Int What do you think of the P and C ?

Fr I think it is a good thing but few of us come.

Int Have you been to Myrna's school or had any other contacts with the school this year?

Fr I go to P and C meetings regularly, Education Week and speech night.

Int (Apart from what you have just told me), since Myrna first began secondary school, has the headmaster or any of the teachers ever contacted you to discuss her progress, courses, or anything else?

Fr No.

Mr and Mrs Walker, daughter Lola

Mr and Mrs Walker were born in Australia. Mr and Mrs Walker both left school at 14 years of age. Mr Walker is a divisional services manager in an earth-moving business; Mrs Walker is a shop assistant. They act as guardians to two children.

Lola; IQ = 91 (low); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school. Lola was born in the New Hebrides.

Int Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education?

Fr No. Now that we have no obligation towards children of our own, we would rather direct our attentions as to where they are, right?

Int What do you think of the P and C ?

Fr A worthwhile organisation but I think it is stifled by the principals of the schools. In other words I think that if the P and C doesn't abide by the rules and regulations laid down by the top brass of the school they don't get nowhere.

Lola's questionnaire comments indicated that her parents (whom she regards as Mr and Mrs Walker) would not be disappointed if she left school. In response to the question, 'Please write a few sentences on the influence that your father and mother have had on your hopes about education and jobs', she commented: 'Both my parents have encouraged me and to do my best.'

In Grade 10 Lola aspired to leave school and go to technical college.

Mr and Mrs Kerner; son Marco

Mr Kerner was born in Czechoslovakia and Mrs Kerner in Italy. They came to Australia in 1951/1952. Mr Kerner completed secondary school and attended Prague University - he recently obtained his Ph.D.; Mrs Kerner completed her secondary education but has not undertaken any further education courses. Mr Kerner is a chemical engineer and Mrs Kerner a bookkeeper. Mr and Mrs Kerner have two children. Their son Marco was born in Australia.

Details of Marco's background and other information relating to the Kerner family are given in Chapter 3 page 138.

Note: The interview was conducted in English.

Int. Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education?

Fr I would say leave the jobs to the people who are qualified to do it - who are the teachers. Unless there is a very special problem with the child - then let the parents know.

Int What do you think of the P and C ?

Mo I don't think much of it. We sort of keep away from it.

Int Why do you say you don't think much of it?

Mo Well I think, I went along to some of these meetings when the kids were smaller and I found they were mostly women who would sit around gossiping. They don't even do much, you know, and I think I would rather leave it to the teachers to do their jobs without interfering. I would just rather keep away. I'm not a committee type really, or anything like that.

Int Have you been to Marco's school or had any other contacts with the school this year?

Mo No

Fr No, not this year.

Mo We haven't had any open day or anything like that.

To sum up, only one-fifth of the parents interviewed expressed any desire for involvement in secondary education (Tables 35A and 35B). The majority of parents did not wish to be involved. Some felt that they were incapable of helping. Others felt that education was best left to teachers. One-fifth of the parents of NES migrant origin gave 'language problems' as the reason why they did not wish to be involved.

The case studies illustrate parents' views that they are not qualified to play a part in policy making and that such matters are best left to teachers. Professional parents, in particular, prefer to 'leave teaching to the experts'. The majority of parents in the case studies hold pro-school and pro-teacher attitudes and would be disappointed if their child left school before completing the HSC.

Parents stressed the need for more personalised and improved communication between parents and teachers so that school is not 'independent of the home'. At best, parents considered their role to be one of learning about the education system and, if possible, for communication with teachers on a one-to-one basis about their own child.

Parents' Comments about Teachers at Their Child's School

When parents were asked what they thought of teachers (Table 36) there were 19 per cent of parents who did not wish to comment as they did not know teachers. Of those parents who commented on teachers, only about half made

TABLE 36

PARENTS' COMMENTS ABOUT TEACHERS AT THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL

All parents in interview sample

Comments	Total sample		Parents' Country of Birth							
			Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Positive										
All, most teachers are: good, helpful, competent	293	44	92	39	170	49	18	35	13	42
Some, individual teachers are: good, helpful, competent	5	1	2	1	3	1	..	..	..	..
Sub-total	298	(45)	94	(40)	173	(50)	18	(35)	13	(42)
Negative										
All, most teachers are apathetic about: their job, students' progress	65(a)	10	35	15	21	6	7	13	2	6
All, most teachers are not strict enough	41	6	12	5	20	6	2	4	7	23
All, most teachers are prejudiced	4	1	2	1	2	1	..	..	..	..
Miscellaneous comments relating to some, individual teachers	23	3	10	4	5	1	6	12	2	6
Sub-total	133	(20)	59	(25)	48	(14)	15	(29)	11	(35)
Positive and negative										
All, most, some teachers are good but some need to be stricter	40	6	10	4	25	7	4	8	1	3
All, most, some teachers are good but some are apathetic	21	3	11	5	5	1	2	4	3	10
Some teachers are good, some are: bad, poor in technique	27	4	12	5	12	3	2	4	1	3
All, most, some teachers are good but some are: prejudiced, biased	10	2	6	3	2	1	2	4	..	..
Miscellaneous comments	8	1	7	3	1	..	..	..	..	..
Sub-total	106	(16)	46	(20)	45	(13)	10	(19)	5	(16)
No comment offered: parents preferred not to comment as they felt they did not know teachers well enough	129	19	36	15	82	24	9	17	2	6
TOTAL	666	100	235	100	348	100	52	100	31	100

(a) In nine cases parents offered the additional comment 'lazy and poor technique' and in 12 cases parents offered the additional comment 'not strict enough, too familiar'.

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the comment without qualifying statements such as, 'I don't know teachers', 'I can only tell from the report', and 'I can only give my opinion on what my child says.' The proportion of migrant parents with NES backgrounds who did not comment because they did not know teachers (24 per cent) is higher than for both Australian-born parents (15 per cent) and for both ES migrant parents (17 per cent).

Overall, parents made more positive than negative comments. The migrant parents with NES backgrounds made more positive statements concerning teachers than: the Australian parents, the overseas born ES parents and the ES/NES parent group - 50 per cent versus 40 per cent, 35 per cent and 42 per cent respectively. In the previous chapter, we showed that the NES migrant students also made more favourable comments about teachers than students with both parents born in Australia. Positive comments indicated that teachers are good, helpful, friendly, understanding, competent, dedicated and hardworking. Negative comments indicated that teachers are apathetic about such things as their job and assisting the development of individual potential in students. Overall, 12 per cent of parents said teachers are not strict enough. There are 9 per cent of Australian-born parents, 13 per cent of migrant parents with NES backgrounds and 12 per cent of migrant parents with ES backgrounds who said that teachers are not strict enough.

Case studies were developed to provide specific examples of parents' comments about teachers at their child's school.

Mr and Mrs Xerri, son Stefan

Mr and Mrs Xerri were born in Persia. They came to Australia in 1971. Mr Xerri never attended school. Mrs Xerri left school at 16 years of age. Mr Xerri, at the time of interview, was unemployed; he was previously employed in a car factory. Mrs Xerri is a process worker. Mr and Mrs Xerri have three children.

Stefan; IQ = 91 (low); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low HSC. Stefan was born in Persia and arrived in Australia at the age of 12.

Note: The interview was conducted in Assyrian and translated.

Int What do you think of teachers at the school?

Mo Yes. They are all right but they shouldn't tell the others not to come to school because you don't understand English. They should help them always.

Stefan's questionnaire answers indicated that he felt his parents would be disappointed if he did not complete HSC. In response to the question, 'Please write a few sentences on the influence that your father and mother have had on your hopes about education and jobs', he commented: 'They think I should be able to pass higher school certificate in which case I know that there very little chance for me to get the higher school certificate.' In response to the question, 'Apart from your mother and father, have any other poeple influenced your hopes about education and jobs? Please say who and in what ways?', he commented: 'Yes the teachers say that I wouldn't be able to pass because of my low marks.' He further added in response to the question, 'How do you find teachers at your school?' 'I found most of my teachers fear and understandible. But in some cases I find them not fear because they treat me bad than others.'

Mr and Mrs Roberts, son Clive

Mr and Mrs Roberts were both born in Australia. Mr Roberts left school at 17 years of age; Mrs Roberts at 11 years of age. Mr Roberts is a salesman; Mrs Roberts works for her father as a telephonist and clerk. They have three children.

Clive; IQ = 101 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium SC and left school.

Int What do you think of teachers at the school?

Mo Oh well from what I can gather Clive likes them all. I don't think they do a great deal regards helping them. If a boy can't understand something and that child can't go over and say, 'Well, I don't understand it,' he won't get any help.

Int You mean he has to ask for it or otherwise he is not given it?

Mo That is right. In their period they are told to do such and such from page one to six then that is it, but they can't go up to the teacher and say, 'Well I don't understand it'. The teacher just doesn't make a point of bringing forward that particular matter.

Int Why is that do you think?

Mo Well I don't know. I think it is just that the teachers, well it is a job to them like any other job. I just don't think they have got the enthusiasm really to what we had when we were at school.

Fr The place might be a bit bigger too, love.

Mo Oh no, we had a class of say 30 children when I was at school, but I learnt all my tables when I was in 3rd class and I have got a child who is in sixth class and only knows three lots of tables and not the others.

Int And what do you think is the cause of this?

Mo I think it is very bad.

Int What do you think causes this?

Mo Well I think it is the teachers' interest.

Fr It was different the way they were being taught. They were being taught through this rod thing, curson rods or something.

Mo The next year after they are taught that, they are taught times table; and I went up one year and I was told the child only needs to know two lots of tables - which was five times and two times and didn't have to know the rest - and this was in fourth class; and yet now sixth class they are supposed to know the lot. So I really blame a lot of it onto the teachers themselves - and there are so many relieving teachers.

Int What do you mean by relieving?

Mo Well teachers that are away, absent, been sick, and taking time off to have babies; well from the lack of attention from casual teachers coming in, they have just lost interest from the children.

Int Would you like to add anything to that Fr?

Fr I would say that, too. I reckon these two youngest ones we have got here have had a pretty rough time. The younger fellow was in hospital two or three times in the first two or three years of schooling, and then when he did get to school proper, he would have a teacher for three months and then the teacher would be somewhere else or be sick or something and then someone else would come in and relieve, and a different method of teaching, and it snowballed.

Mo Well one teacher teaches differently to another teacher, and

> even after four years Clive has been at North Western there has been so many different teachers there for the particular subjects, it is just not funny. They just can't seem to hold the jobs. Whether they are getting underpaid or not I don't know. They are just not settled in, and they just haven't got the attention to the pupils, to really be able to relate to them.

Clive's comments about teachers appeared to support his parents' point of view. In Grade 10, in response to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', he remarked:

> Some teachers have great personality but others don't. If you have a problem, the teachers are willing to sought it out but others say they haven't got time and most of them don't want to be mixed in with anyones' other problems.

Clive said that his parents would be disappointed if he did not go on to the HSC. However, in response to the question which referred to the influence that his father and mother have had on his hopes about education and jobs he replied, 'My parents have found apprenticeships and I write to them saying what job I want to get.'

Clive left school after Grade 10 and obtained a job as a 'fitter and machinist'. He gave the following reason for leaving, 'I would prefer to do an apprenticeship or a career to earn money, meet new friends and future life.' After leaving school he attended a technical college on a part-time basis to qualify for the apprenticeship.

Mr and Mrs Thompson, son Alistair

Mr and Mrs Thompson were born in Australia. Mr and Mrs Thompson left school at 15 years of age. Mr Thompson is a clerk of works and holds a trade certificate; Mrs Thompson is a teacher's aide. They have only one child.

Alistair; IQ = 114 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium HSC.

Int What do you think of teachers at the school?

Fr Very good.

Mo They're fantastic.

Int You've met them have you?

Mo Yes, we go to the P and C meetings and most special nights for the various subjects. They're very helpful, and seem nice; really care.

Fr Anything we've ever asked in any way they've answered.

Int No avoiding or anything else?

Fr None whatever.

Alistair's comments about teachers are equally positive. In Grade 10, in response to the question 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', he remarked:

> I find the teachers at this school very good as they are always ready to help you if you have any problems. The teachers I have are friendly and can always take a joke and not blow their top.
>
> Overall the education system is not bad. However changes that could be made are:
>
> 1. To cater for the minority of students. For instance if a group of students want to do a subject and there is not enough for a class, they cannot do that subject. I think this should be changed.
>
> 2. Allow for some more freedom in classes.

Alistair said that his parents would be disappointed if he did not stay at school until the HSC. In response to a question about the influence that his mother and father have had on his hopes about education and jobs he replied, 'At the moment my mother is talking about for me to become a teacher'.

Mr and Mrs Hadjipaterou, son Graham

Mr and Mrs Hadjipaterou were born in Egypt. They came to Australia in 1970. Mr Hadjipaterou left school at 15 years of age; Mrs Hadjipaterou at 12 years of age. Mr Hadjipaterou is a labourer; Mrs Hadjipaterou is a housewife. Mr and Mrs Hadjipaterou have two children.

Graham; IQ = 87 (low); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: low SC and left school.

Note: The interview was conducted in Greek and translated.

Int What do you think of teachers at the school?

Fr As I told you before, for students who want to study, school is very good. I had my daughter in a Catholic school and there, they forced the kids to study and do their homework and she was always a good student. But here in this school that Graham goes to, they don't force him to study. If they want to study well, all right. If they don't want to, well bad luck. The teachers don't care much if the students learn anything or not.

Mo And that is why Graham finds it difficult to learn.

Int Do you think Graham is capable of doing better than at present?

Fr Yes, I think so. If teachers were a bit more...

Int What makes you say that?

Fr Because he is very clever. When he has exams, he sits down and studies for a week or so before the exams and he gets 85 - 90 all the time.

Int Except that he is clever, why do you think that he can do better?

Fr Teachers should force him to study more. To encourage him more. It is not like the Catholic schools. There my daughter learned a lot because she was scared from the sisters. They were very strict.

Mo Yes, they were very strict with the kids.

Fr But in this school there is no severity. Teachers and students are all friends. They sit down and talk like good old friends. There is no difference between students and teachers. I remember in my schooldays they use to give us the cane now and then.

In his questionnaire answers, Graham commented that he felt his parents would be disappointed if he did not complete HSC and that their influence on his hopes about education and jobs had been 'a lot'. In response to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', he replied: 'Teachers are very good to me, they are trying to help me as much as they can. But some of them unable to control the class.' Graham did not go on to the HSC.

Mr and Mrs Richards, daughter Sandra

Mr and Mrs Richards were born in Australia. Only Mrs Richards was interviewed. She left school at 17 years of age. Mrs Richards works as an administrative officer and teaches ballet part-time. She holds a diploma in ballet. She has four children.

Sandra; IQ = 123 (high); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium HSC.

Int What do you think of teachers at the school?

Mo Do you mean generally?

Int No, I mean what do you think of teachers at school?

Mo At the school, well the ones that I come in contact with, I'm rather pleased. Of course you get all types; naturally you get some people whom you can converse with easier than others some people whom you understand and who can understand your point of view or understand a question that you put, but I think overall they're a pretty good bunch of teachers. My four girls have gone to the same school.

Sandra's perceptions of teachers are concisely stated in Grade 10, in response to the question: 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school': 'Some teachers are OK but others can be absolute pigs.'

Sandra said that her parents would not be disappointed if she did not stay at school to the HSC. She gave the following response to the question, 'Please write a few sentences on the influence that your father and mother have had on your hopes about education and jobs': 'My mother has had no influence on my hopes for future education and what I want to do in life.'

Mr and Mrs Papagos, son Philip

Mr and Mrs Papagos were born in Greece. They came to Australia in

1954/1955. Mr Papagos left school at 14 years of age, Mrs Papagos at 12 years of age. Mr Papagos is a forklift and crane operator; Mrs Papagos is an office cleaner. Mr and Mrs Papagos have one child.

Philip; IQ = 108 (medium); aspired to the HSC in Grade 9 and/or Grade 10; school accreditation: medium HSC. Philip was born in Australia.

Note: The interview was conducted in Greek and translated.

Int	What do you think of teachers at the school?
Fr	Not very good. For one thing they don't have the right to punish the children. The children do whatever they like at school. Last year they had a strike because they wanted to have long hair; they just got up and went outside the school and started shouting. If they were in Greece they would have been expelled from school altogether.
Int	(Aside) [At this point mother interrupts and says to father not to say too much because the tape recorder is running. He said that he didn't care too much about that and there was nothing to be afraid of anyhow.]
Fr	There is no discipline and there is no respect for the elders.

Philip's questionnaire answers indicated that he felt his parents would be disappointed if he did not complete HSC. In response to the question, 'Please write a few sentences on the influence that your father and mother have had on your hopes about education and jobs', he stated: 'I personally feel that it would be preferable to be in agreement with my parents but I wouldn't hesitate to disagree if the occasion required it.' In response to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school', Philip commented: 'Teachers in my school are fair and I either like them or just have to put up with them.'

To sum up, when parents were asked what they thought of teachers at their child's school, about one-fifth said that they did not know them well enough to comment (Table 36). In fact, the majority of parents seemed to have little first-hand knowledge of the teachers at their child's school. The proportion who gave this reply was higher for the parents of NES origins. Overall, parents made more positive than negative comments. Teachers were described as good, helpful and competent. There were some parents of NES origin who indicated that teachers tended to reject rather than help children with English language difficulties but, overall, migrant parents made more positive comments about teachers than Australian-born parents. About one-tenth of the parents said that teachers were not strict enough. More NES migrant parents than Australian-born parents wanted stricter teachers. But a similar proportion of migrant parents from English-speaking-countries to that of the NES group wanted stricter teachers.

There were some NES migrant parents illustrated in the case studies who argued that teachers should have greater rights to administer punishment. These parents disapproved of signs of friendship between teachers and students and drew on their own school experiences for comparisons.

The case studies illustrate the wide range of views on teachers that are held by parents. Some parents say that teachers are: good, fantastic, very helpful, and a pretty good bunch; while others state that teachers are: apathetic and do not give enough individual help to students with particular problems because of a lack of teacher enthusiasm. Although a majority of parents seemed to approve of teachers, the lack of parent-teacher contact, which we discuss in more detail later in this chapter, clouds the result.

Parents' Comments about the P and C

Only 4 per cent of parents interviewed said that they attended P and C meetings (Table 37A). An additional 36 per cent thought the P and C was a good idea but did not attend.

Surprisingly, there are 96 parents who said that they did not know what the P and C is - NES migrant families made up 94 of this group. Approximately half of each of the Greek and Lebanese families said that they did not know what the P and C is (Table 37B). An additional 24 NES migrant parents (7 per cent) said that they did not attend the P and C owing to language difficulty.

There were 63 parents (9 per cent) who did not attend because the P and

TABLE 37A

PARENTS' COMMENTS ABOUT THE P & C

All parents in interview sample

Comments	Total sample		Parents' Country of Birth							
			Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English speaking country	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parents attend and think that P & C is: a good idea, a well run organisation, a good fund raiser	26	4	11	5	14	4	..	..	1	(3)
Parents do not attend:										
But think that P & C is a good idea, fund raiser, chance to meet teachers	239(a)	36	103	44	101	29	21	40	14	45
And do not know what the P & C is	96	14	2	1	94	27	..	..	..	..
And have no opinions to offer	117	18	48	20	55	16	12	23	2	6
Because of lack of time, interest	85(b)	13	30	13	36	10	10	19	9	29
Because: it is poorly run, those who attend do not make newcomers welcome	63(c)	9	40	17	11	3	9	17	3	10
Owing to language difficulty	24	4	..	..	24	7	..	..	..	..
Sub-total	624	(94)	223	(95)	321	(92)	52	(100)	28	(90)
No comment offered	16	2	1	..	13	4	..	..	2	6
TOTAL	666	100	235	100	348	100	52	100	31	100

(a) In 19 cases mother helps at the tuck shop, in 32 cases parents added that they had attended at primary school (four of whom added that the P & C at primary school: was a lot better, parents were more involved and needed).

(b) In three cases mother helps at the tuck shop.

(c) In 12 cases mother helps at the tuck shop.

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TABLE 37B

PARENTS' COMMENTS ABOUT THE P & C

Both parents born in non-English-speaking countries

Comments in rank order	Parents' Country of Birth															
	Both non-English-speaking countries		Both Greek		Both Italian		Both Lebanese		Both Maltese		Both Yugoslav		Another non-English-speaking country (both same)		Different non-English-speaking country	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parents attend and think that P & C is: a good idea, a well run organisation good fund raiser	14	4	1	2	1	2	1	3	1	4	2	4	3	4	5	9
Parents do not attend:																
But think that P & C is a good idea, fund raiser, chance to meet teachers	101	29	13	28	18	36	2	5	11	41	11	24	25	29	21	37
And do not know what the P & C is	94	27	21	46	11	22	20	53	6	22	11	24	18	21	7	12
And have no opinions to offer	55	16	5	11	10	20	12	32	5	19	5	11	12	14	6	11
Because of lack of time, interest	36	10	1	2	5	10	2	5	3	11	5	11	15	18	5	9
Because it is poorly run, those who attend do not make newcomers welcome	11	3	..	..	1	2	..	..	1	4	..	..	4	5	5	9
Owing to language difficulty	24	7	4	9	1	2	1	3	..	..	5	11	6	7	7	12
Sub-total	321	(92)	44	(96)	46	(92)	37	(97)	26	(96)	37	(82)	80	(94)	51	(89)
No comment offered	13	4	1	2	3	6	..	..	..	..	6	13	2	2	1	2
TOTAL	348	100	46	100	50	100	38	100	27	100	45	100	85	100	57	100

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C is poorly run or because those who do attend do not make newcomers welcome. A higher proportion of these parents were from the Australian born parent group (17 per cent) and the overseas born group with ES backgrounds (17 per cent).

It is worthwhile to note at this point that we interviewed each school principal to find out how much each of the P and C Associations raised per annum. The data were supplied for 13 of the 16 schools:

(a) 1 P and C raised $7000.
(b) 6 P and Cs raised from $4000 to $6000.
(c) 2 P and Cs raised from $2000 to $4000.
(d) 4 P and Cs raised from $ 500 to $2000.

The number of schools is too low to enable us to draw any firm conclusions about trends in terms of high/low migrant density or boy/girl coeducational. However, no trends were apparent as far as we could discern. In view of the likelihood that few parents were involved (our attendance figures relate only to the parents of Grade 10 students) the amounts raised are substantial. However, considerable variations in the amount raised do occur among the schools in our sample, and as has been pointed out in the case studies, if the P and C is expected to provide materials necessary for educational improvements, students in districts where parents are poor or disinterested will be at a severe disadvantage.

Case studies show that parents do not consider that the P and C has any effective voice in decision making within the school. They see its only role being to raise money and acquiesce to the requests of the school principal. (Perhaps lack of support for the P and C is related to its restricted role?)

Some migrant parents in case studies in the previous section obviously tried to make contact with the school via the P and C but were made to feel unwelcome. Their comment that '...newcomer goes on one side and Australian on the other' illustrates this problem. At this particular P and C it was apparently the practice for parents to offer to host other parents for tea and cakes. When this migrant mother offered to host the tea party, the offer was turned down by the P and C president.

The case studies contained only one student's parents of NES origin who were really involved in the P and C. Regrettably, through their contact they had formed an unfavourable view of the education system, '...good students are favoured while bad students are immediately thrown aside'. The tables show that migrant parents who have been involved in the P and C are something of an exception. Approximately one-quarter of NES migrant parents did not even know what the P and C was.

Parents' Comments about Contacts with School Personnel at Organised Events, Activities, where All Parents Were Invited to Attend

Overall, 32 per cent of parents attended such functions as parent-teacher evenings, open days, sporting events, speech days and concerts (Tables 38A, 38B). A higher proportion of the migrant parents of NES origin (69 per cent) did not attend such activities in comparison with parents who are: Australian-born (51 per cent), born in overseas ES countries (54 per cent) and from the ES/NES group (61 per cent). Variations in the proportions of parents who did not attend occur among the NES ethnic groups. For example, 89 per cent of the Lebanese and 76 per cent of the Greek parents did not attend while, in contrast, 54 per cent of parents from different NES countries did not attend.

We also investigated school attendance of parents cross-tabulated by higher SES/lower SES. There were 37 per cent of the upper SES parent group who attended parent-teacher evenings and open days etc., compared with 29 per cent of the lower SES parent group. Eleven per cent of the upper SES parents attended plays, concerts and so on (but not parent-teacher evenings etc.) compared with 5 per cent of the lower SES group. Even when we take into account that the NES migrant parents are disproportionately represented in the lower SES group, it is apparent that lower SES parents are not as well represented as the upper SES group at the functions listed.

To sum up, only one-third of the parents in the interview sample attended organised school events such as parent-teacher evenings, concerts and speech days, and the proportion was even lower for the NES migrant group. Many of the parents in the case studies indicated that they found parent-teacher evenings and open days too crowded and too rushed to allow them to

TABLE 38A

PARENTS' CONTACT WITH SCHOOL AT ORGANISED: EVENTS, ACTIVITIES WHERE ALL PARENTS WERE INVITED TO ATTEND

All parents in interview sample

Comments	Total sample		Parents' Country of Birth							
			Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parents attend: parent/teacher evenings, open days, education days, subject meetings (and plays etc.)	213(a)	32	89	38	94	27	18	35	12	39
Parents attend, mentioned attending: plays, concerts, films, dances, speech days, sporting events only	46	7	26	11	14	4	6	12	..	..
Parents do not attend, no longer attend, did not mention attending any event	407	61	120	51	240	69	28	54	19	61
TOTAL	**666**	**100**	**235**	**100**	**348**	**100**	**52**	**100**	**31**	**100**

(a) In 18 cases parents added that they found parent/teacher evenings etc. a poor way to discuss their child's program with teachers; in 12 cases parents mentioned that they found the meetings to be satisfactory.

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TABLE 38B

PARENTS' CONTACT WITH SCHOOL AT ORGANISED: EVENTS, ACTIVITIES WHERE ALL PARENTS WERE INVITED TO ATTEND

Parents born in non-English-speaking countries

Comments in rank order	Parents' Country of Birth															
	Both non-English-speaking countries		Both Greek		Both Italian		Both Lebanese		Both Maltese		Both Yugoslav		Another non-English-speaking country (both same)		Different non-English-speaking country	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parents attend: parent teacher evenings, open days, subject meetings (and plays etc.)	94	27	9	20	15	30	4	11	8	30	9	20	24	28	25	44
Parents attend, mentioned attending: plays, concerts, films, dances, speech days, sporting events only	14	4	2	4	4	8	..	..	1	4	1	2	5	6	1	2
Parents do not attend, no longer attend, did not mention attending any event	240	69	35	76	31	62	34	89	18	67	35	78	56	66	31	54
TOTAL	348	100	46	100	50	100	38	100	27	100	45	100	85	100	57	100

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engage in meaningful dialogue with the teachers concerning their child's progress. They seemed to want the opportunity to talk to teachers on a more individual basis. Perhaps more NES migrant parents would attend if steps were taken to overcome the language barriers that deter many from contacting the school.

Parents' Comments about Contacts with School Personnel Initiated by the School to Discuss, on an Individual Basis, Any Issue Concerning Their Child

When we interviewed parents, their children were in Grade 10 - they had attended secondary school for a period of three years. Yet when we asked parents if school personnel had ever contacted them since their child started at secondary school, to discuss anything at all on an individual basis, only 11 per cent of parents responded in the affirmative (Table 39). A sizable proportion of the contacts that were initiated by the school were concerned with some problem associated with the child, e.g. truancy, conduct. The proportion of parents contacted by school personnel ranged from 10 per cent for parents born overseas in NES countries to 16 per cent for parents born overseas in ES countries. Again it is the NES group who experienced least contact with the school.

Parents' Comments about Contacts They Initiated with School Personnel to Discuss, on an Individual Basis, Any Issue Concerning Their Child

There were 124 (19 per cent) parents in the interview sample who themselves initiated contact(s) with the school (Table 40). However, only 14 per cent of the NES migrant group initiated contact with the school compared with 25 per cent of Australian born parents. Most of the contacts were concerned with the child's work or future; conduct and school progress were also discussed.

There were 14 per cent of the lower SES parent group who initiated contact with the school compared with 29 per cent of the upper SES group. It is fairly clear that the upper SES parents initiated relatively more contacts with school personnel but, even among this upper SES group, it is worth noting that over 70 per cent had initiated no contact over the three-year period that their child had been in secondary school.

The case studies show that schools sometimes place restriction on parents' access to their child's teachers. In addition, because each child is taught by a number of different teachers, parents find it difficult to

TABLE 39

PARENTS' CONTACT WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL (SINCE THEIR CHILD FIRST STARTED AT SECONDARY SCHOOL) INITIATED BY THE PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS OR SCHOOL COUNSELLOR TO DISCUSS AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL THEIR CHILD'S PROGRESS OR ANYTHING ELSE (a)

All parents in interview sample

Comments	Total sample		Parents' Country of Birth							
			Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Contacts were initiated by school personnel to discuss the child's: work, future	36	5	11	5	21	6	3	6	1	3
Contacts were initiated by school personnel to discuss the child's conduct, absences, truancy	45	6	24	10	14	4	5	10	2	6
No contacts were initiated at an individual level	585	88	200	85	313	90	44	85	28	90
TOTAL	666	100	235	100	348	100	52	100	31	100

(a) Contacts at parent/teacher evenings where all parents were invited to attend are not included in this table — such contacts are shown in Table 38A.

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TABLE 40

PARENTS' CONTACT WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL (SINCE THEIR CHILD FIRST STARTED SECONDARY SCHOOL) INITIATED BY THEMSELVES TO DISCUSS AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL THEIR CHILD'S: WORK, FUTURE, CONDUCT

All parents in interview sample

Comments	Total sample		Parents' Country of Birth							
			Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parents contacted school to discuss their child's: work, future	93	14	45	19	39	11	6	12	3	10
Parents contacted school to discuss: their child's conduct, the conduct of other children towards their child	31	5	14	6	10	3	4	8	3	10
Parents did not initiate any contacts	542	81	176	75	299	86	42	81	25	81
TOTAL	666	100	235	100	348	100	52	100	31	100

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know whom to contact if they had a general problem concerning their child's progress or welfare.

Parents' Comments about: School, Schooling in General

Among the final questions in the interview schedule, we asked a very general question: 'These days, what is most important to young people for success in later life?' Almost 60 per cent of parents felt that education is important for success in life (Table 41). Overall, approximately the same proportions of Australian parents and NES migrant parents responded in this way. One-third of the parents did not make any comment. About one-tenth of the parents took the opportunity to say that school fails to meet the needs of the child.

Comments from Parents of an Early School Leaver

Mr and Mrs Mitchell, son Jack

Mr and Mrs Mitchell were both born in Australia. Mr Mitchell left school at 17 years of age, Mrs Mitchell at 15 years of age. Mr Mitchell is employed as a motor vehicle assessor in a government insurance office and holds certificates in sales and real estate; Mrs Mitchell is a shop assistant. They have four children.

Jack; IQ = 90 (low); did not aspire to the HSC in Grades 9 and 10; school accreditation: left before SC.

Int	Do you think Jack is capable of doing better than at present?

Mo	No.

Int	When he was at school?

Mo	No.

Int	And again because of the dyslexia?

Fr	Basically, I think.

Fr	Can't pin it down to anything.

Mo	Yes. But now that he's done, we didn't think he'd be able
	to cope with the theory of tech., but he's done well.

Fr	Because he is doing something he likes.

TABLE 41

PARENTS' COMMENTS ABOUT: SCHOOL, SCHOOLING IN GENERAL

All parents in interview sample

Comments	Total sample		Parents' Country of Birth							
			Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Education is important for success in life	367	55	125	53	203	58	25	48	14	45
School, the system fails to meet the needs of the child	73(a)	11	38	16	23	7	8	15	4	13
The education system is good	6(b)	1	..	..	4	1	2	4	..	..
School encourages children to leave school	3(c)	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	1	3
Sub-total	**449**	**(67)**	**164**	**(70)**	**231**	**(66)**	**35**	**(67)**	**19**	**(61)**
No comment offered	**217**	**33**	**71**	**30**	**117**	**34**	**17**	**33**	**12**	**39**
TOTAL	**666**	**100**	**235**	**100**	**348**	**100**	**52**	**100**	**31**	**100**

(a) In 46 cases parents offered the additional comment 'education is important for success in life'.

(b) In 2 cases parents offered the additional comment 'education is important for success in life'.

(c) In 2 cases parents offered the additional comment 'education is important for success in life'.

A total of 417 parents commented that 'education is important for success in life'.
By parents' country of birth, this figure was made up:

Both Australian	149	(63%)
Both non-English-speaking countries	218	(63%)
Another or different English-speaking countries	31	(60%)
One parent English-speaking, other non-English-speaking country	18	(58%)

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Mo In his last year at high school, he did his best year ever.

Fr Because he was graded up from the lowest opportunity class. We went to the school and we said, 'Look he's in a class with kids that just don't want to learn. He's probably being taught by teachers that, all they're interested in is getting the period over with the least amount of trouble so that they can do something else; and he wants to learn but there is just no opportunity'. Though they were doing a curriculum that was half a year's work, and he felt he was being made a 'nong'.

Mo He was absolutely - what's the word for it - devastated, when they put him in the lowest class. I'll never forget it, it was degrading. We're in that big hall and we happened to be sitting almost at the very front near the teachers on the stage, and he called out, starting from the 'A' class. We didn't say, but it was obvious he knew the boys who did well in Jack's school and everybody in that particular school. Anyway, he called out all these classes and he got to the last class and Jack is still sitting there. Well, the tears were rolling down his face and I wanted to have a weep myself, it was dreadful.

Int Poor Jack.

Fr It was like a big auction block.

Mo He almost ran all the way up. Now that hall is so big at City School. He almost ran all the way up there, and by the time he got out the door he was bawling. Anyway they went to the class...and I think it was the deputy principal [who spoke to them] and he didn't impress Jack at all. Jack came out and he said, 'Well you know what they think of us in our class, they think we're all dumb and stupid and that they don't even give us proper levels, you know. They only give us half the lesson and I've got to go back next year and do the other half.

Fr The first year curriculum took 2 years.

Int Was that Form 1?

Mo That was 1st form and that means he only really did one, well one year took two years. And anyway I went up. He came straight home and I went up to see the counsellor.

Fr The school counsellor.

Mo And he said,'Well, I'll assess Jack again but that is all I can do'. Anyway Jack went up to the next class with three other boys.

Fr Then he started to work. He got good marks in science, he got up to about 3rd in the class in science in one year, and we were astounded.

Mo I was so frightened. I thought we've had dreadful trouble with him. You know he wagged school. But anyway it sorted itself out, even though that wasn't much of a class either. But anyway, I thought that was a dreadful thing to do to them.

Int I've never heard of them being graded in front of the whole form.

Mo Well they didn't say this is 1A or 1B. Well how do they do it down there? I don't know how they do it now, they just call them all, and all the parents are there.

Fr All the parents are looking to see which class Jack's in and all this sort of rot.

Mo And make such a big thing of it.

Jack's Comments (Extract from the 1975 Leavers' Questionnaire):

Q Write a few lines about why you left secondary school when you did.

A I left a few weeks early to earn some money to buy a new Board, when I was offord an apprentaship and after some thought I took it.

Q What are your hopes for further education for the next two years?

A I hafe to do forth form at Tec. And if I do super well I will go on.

Q Please write a few sentences on the influence that your father and mother have had on your hopes about education and jobs.

A Well, my father and mother influenced a lot, the fact is I wasn't much good at school.

Q Apart from your mother and father, have any other people influenced your hopes about education and jobs? Please say who and in what ways.

A There was a teacher at school which always youst to say, finish it now and you won't feel sorry for yourself.

Q Write a few lines about how you found teachers at your last secondary school attended.

A Not many teachers where interested in my class. We were a bunch of show-off and never seamed interested in learning, but I were.

One serious by-product of the failure in parent-teacher communication which we have illustrated in this chapter is reflected in the case study which concerns Mr and Mrs Mitchell and their dyslexic son Jack. The main points are as follows:

(a) When the parents were first contacted they were very keen to be interviewed - they thought they were asked to have the interview so that they could discuss their son's dyslexic problems.

(b) When the parents were asked, 'Finally, is there anything that you think is important in relation to Jack's future that I haven't asked you about?' Mr Mitchell said that they had needed more help and assistance from the primary school in Jack's case. The dyslexic problem was not identified early enough. The parents asked their doctor to write a letter to headmistress and it was apparently 'lost' - 'They were pretending that it wasn't there you know.'

Mr Mitchell:
Well they classed most of the kids that had it and had a problem as lazy students and they just put them in the back of the class, or backward or something like that you know.

Interviewer:
They didn't understand the problem?

Mr Mitchell:
Sure.

(c) When Jack commenced high school he went through the quite shocking emotional experience outlined. What excuse can there be for calling out membership of homogeneously formed classes in a large hall with all parents and students present?

(d) Mr and Mrs Mitchell initiated a contact with the school counsellor and managed to get Jack shifted up a grade but apparently this class also was not under control.

Mrs Mitchell:
The discipline problem was really bad in that low class and then they send a girl, this is what is ridiculous.

Mr Mitchell:
She'd been teaching for three months.

Mrs Mitchell:
A girl of 18 or oh no, she'd have to be what, 20 I suppose.

Mr Mitchell:
She'd only been teaching for a matter of months, and the kids had her in tears every lesson.

Mrs Mitchell:
To teach this class.

Mr Mitchell:
Yes. How could she cope? The moment they'd sort of start to harass her she'd break down. She couldn't control them.

Mrs Mitchell:
Amazes me why they even do that, a young girl with that class.

Interviewer:
Hard.

Mrs Mitchell:
Oh yes. They must be trying to break her.

(e) The school contacted Mr and Mrs Mitchell about Jack on three occasions:

- (i) Jack had a bit of an altercation on the sporting field once - this was ironed out.
- (ii) He wagged school one day - a day Mrs Mitchell was on canteen duty and one of the teachers casudlly asked where Jack was. Mrs Mitchell located him!
- (iii) They responded to a comment on a report which generally asked parents to come up if the mark was low.

(f) Jack was most concerned about his school performance - his sisters did well at school and he wished to succeed too.

(g) A teacher advised Jack to leave early: 'Finish it now and you won't feel sorry for yourself.'

Jack commented: 'Not many teachers were interested in my class.'

(h) Jack started work with a panel beater. The panel beater was impressed with the way Jack wanted to work and asked Mr Mitchell if Jack would like to be his apprentice. Jack made the decision to accept the offer. He really wanted to be a carpenter but could not get a job.

Very little extra discussion is needed. If a person is found guilty of one criminal act, he stands convicted. Jack Mitchell is sufficient evidence that gross negligence of a professional educational nature occurs in our education systems.

In Chapter 2 we indicated that it makes a lot of difference if parents accept 'the way schools are' as the result of an understanding of processes. We were interested to see if students, teachers and parents were partners in the schooling process and whether, as partners, they possessed a 'shared understanding' of the functions of schooling. We postulated two models of an education system: Model A, an ideal (utopian) system (the partnership model) postulated that authentic interaction should occur among all parties engaged in the education process; Model B, an interpretation of the 'real' education system, postulated that control and knowledge are imposed; firstly on teachers and secondly, on students, with parents acting the role of interested bystanders.

Propositions relevant to the area of concern in this chapter are briefly summarised as follows:

Propositions

11A Students, teachers and parents are partners in the schooling process.
Schools are responsive to local community needs.

11B Students and parents defer to the schooling process espoused by the Education Department.
Schools are insensitive to local community needs.

12A Authentic interaction occurs among students, teachers and parents.
The interests and identities of each group are valued and respected.

12B Only very limited or no interaction takes place among students, teachers and parents.
Each group finds that their interests and identities are defined by others.
No provision is made available for members of each group to influence what happens in schools.

Our data in this chapter focus on parents' perceptions of the educational experience. We cannot say from the data whether teachers would agree or disagree with the comments made.

Several trends emerge from the analyses:

(a) Most parents believe that education is important for success in later life and are vitally concerned about their own child's education.

(b) Most parents do not wish to be involved in secondary education for a variety of reasons which include: parents are not capable, do not have the time, there are language barriers, and education is best left to teachers.

(c) Most parents have little contact with teachers and do not have very much first-hand knowledge about teachers.

(d) A majority of parents are satisfied with teachers and schooling but a sizable group have criticisms and reservations: e.g., the education system fails to meet the needs of the child, teachers are apathetic about their jobs and do not assist students to develop their individual potential, teachers are not strict enough.

(e) The vast majority of parents do not attend the P and C meetings.

(f) The case studies revealed that a number of parents see the need for more personalised and improved communication so that:

  (i) they can learn more about the education system;

  (ii) they can communicate on a one to one basis about their own child.

It is clear that students, teachers and parents are not partners in the schooling process. Parents exert very little influence on the content of schooling and do not see this as their role. In this regard, parents are passive and prefer to 'leave teaching to the teachers'. Our data do not enable us to say much about the notion that schools attempt to limit parental involvement and encourage them to be passive onlookers but what evidence we have indicates that this is indeed the case. Migrant parents with NES backgrounds are one group of parents who have little or no impact on the school, its teachers or its programs. On the other hand, with some reservations concerning laxity of discipline, they are the most supportive of what the school is doing. Propositions 11B and 12B best depict the picture we have painted of parental participation in education.

Several of the propositions that arose out of our theoretical discussions of the migration experience are also reflected in the data of this chapter.

Propositions

13 Non-participation in dominant culture.
Lack a shared understanding of people in the host society.

14 Adherence to a minority culture.
Their attitudes and way of life derive from their country of origin.

15 Non-participation in established groups.
Incomplete, deficient or attenuated relationships with the established community.

16 Outsider status.
Regarded and treated as inferior outsiders by the receiving society.

Comments

There were comparatively more NES migrant parents who said that they did not know teachers. In general, the NES parents were most supportive of instrumental aspects of schooling. However, a comparatively greater proportion of the NES groups expressed reservations along the lines that teachers were not strict enough or made comments reflecting the notion that the culture and values of the school was of some concern to them. All parents in the interview sample had attenuated relationships with school personnel but this was even more so in the case of the NES parent group. A number of NES parents referred to the language barrier as a major reason for their non-participation. In our case studies we found some evidence that NES parents are on occasions the objects of prejudice both from teachers and other parent groups.

To sum up, overall, parents in our study were ill-informed about the school. This was particularly so in the case of parents of NES migrant origin. Parents had little contact with school and few were invited to the school for individual discussions. They have learnt their roles of non-participation and non-partnership and kept out of formal education. They did not make a contribution to the definition of schooling - they allowed their interests to be defined by others. The story of the education system we have told does not begin to approach the 'partnership model' in which students, teachers and parents as partners possess a 'shared understanding' of the functions of schooling.

Many of the parents of NES migrant origin interviewed had incomplete and attenuated relations with the school community to a greater extent than Australian parents. Because of language barriers, many did not contact the school on their own initiative and did not go to school activities. The fact that a sizable number did not even know what the P and C was, highlights just how unaware they were of the school.

CHAPTER 5

SECONDARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PROBLEMS

INTRODUCTION

In the planning stages of the project, we decided to include a survey of teachers' perceptions of the school experience. We proposed to test first-hand our theoretical perspectives concerning the institutional ideology which postulates that the high school fulfils varying functions for children according to how bright it defines them to be. We pointed out that the extent to which the school careers of children will be highly predictable depends on the extent to which teachers, parents and students share, or at least agree to operate on, this common ideology. We also drew attention to several perspectives which undermined the dominance of the institutional ideology.

Of particular relevance to our emphasis in this chapter on teachers' perceptions, is our earlier discussion concerning the incongruence between the school's two accreditation functions: on the one hand, the accreditation of teachers, educational administrators, etc. for employment and promotion; and, on the other, the accreditation of children in the post-school educational and occupational structures. We argued that the operation of the authority structure on which teacher accreditation depends creates such tensions and alienations that the function of accreditating students can be carried out only very imperfectly.

We suspect that there are many teachers who do not support the institutional ideology but, like students, their power to bring about change is weak. Finally, we wished to utilise teachers' perceptions to determine the extent to which there exists a presence or an absence of a shared understanding of school processes among teachers, parents and students.

However, our plans to investigate teacher perceptions had to be curtailed because we did not have the financial resources to mount intensive surveys of the perceptions of each of the teacher, parent and student groups. We decided to concentrate our resources on the latter two groups and to limit our data collection of teachers' perceptions to those aspects which we could elicit from a brief questionnaire. But the value of the data collected is limited because we were unable to expand the results of the questionnaire with data obtained via in-depth interviews.

Related Literature and Research

Traditionally, Australian teachers have little to say publicly about schooling. It is not surprising that there are those who query how democracy works in Australian education. Citizens may bring political pressure to bear but this safeguard is only effective if the public is kept well informed. In Thomas' view (1970:60): 'It is this minimum requirement which our present educational system fails to satisfy.' Barcan (1964:22) presented a similar view: 'For most of its history Australian education has lacked both an informed public opinion and a developed educational theory.'

Thomas (1970) claimed, after reviewing the literature, that Australian education systems are classic examples of bureaucracies, and the source of authority rests not in the self-responsibility of individual teachers but in a system of rules that are specified and enforced. These criticisms of Australian schools are not new, for as Hill stated:

> It is now commonplace to indict schools in fundamental ways: talk of a crisis in education glazes everybody's eyes. We have heard it all before. For decades overseas guests of state education departments have toured our schools, praised the good work and goodwill evident in some corners of some schools, and gone away to condemn our systems for being bureaucratic, inflexible, conformist and mediocre.
>
> Hill (1977:15)

Other writers believe that students are also influenced by the 'system'. D'Urso (1974) drew a parallel with a comment by De Cecco (1971:170) on American secondary schooling, which he believed appropriate to his own: 'The enormous gap between the democratic rhetoric of the school and its rigid control of all student activity within the school is about the most disenchanting hypocrisy the students experience today.'

In New South Wales, deep at the heart of uninformed public opinion, and the reason why overseas guests find an attentive market for their views on our education system, is Section 10 of the Act Relating to Officers and Employees Not to Comment Publicly, which states:

An officer or employee shall not:

> (a) comment publicly upon the administration of any Department of the State; or
>
> (b) use for any purpose other than the discharge of his official duties information gained by, or conveyed to, him through his connection with the Teaching Service or Public Service.

To remove any doubts in the minds of Tasmanian teachers, the Education Regulations: Statutory Rules No, 132 Tasmanian State Education Department, 1967, adds a third provision (p. 54), 'No teacher... (c) shall take part in newspaper correspondence with respect to Departmental matters.' Similar Acts exist in other Australian states. Partridge (1973:192) said of Australian teachers, 'Like the British Navy, they are destined to be a silent service.' The restrictions, however, do not apply to teachers' federations, which have a lot to say about educational issues. In recent years, they have been concerned with educational problems as well as trade union issues of salaries and conditions. However, the destructively negative stance taken by the New South Wales Teachers' Federation from 1973 to 1975 towards proposals for community involvement in education leaves one with the impression that, as an organisation, the Federation suffers many of the problems of the Education Department - the target of the Federation's criticisms. Also, teachers' federations do not solve the issue of a voice for the individual teacher.

As D'Urso (1974:110) indicated, freedom within a bureaucratic organisation reflects freedom to exercise legally derived power over subordinates, and 'It is not the kind of freedom associated with personal autonomy and commonly assumed to be a postulate of moral action and responsibility.' Perhaps it is the Australian teacher whose well-being we should be most concerned about as he or she works in and maintains the academic setting described. For, after all, teachers are exposed to the school environment considerably longer than the mere 10 years spent by most of their students! Writing on the U.S., Jackson considered that many concerned teachers may be under tension because of:

> ...a fundamental ambiguity in the teacher's role. In a sense he is working for the school and against it at the

> same time. He has a dual allegiance - to the preservation of both the institution and the individuals who inhabit it.
>
> Jackson (1968:154)

In times of high employment many teachers simply resigned from teaching, and in 1972 the Australian Advisory Committee on Research and Development in Education (AACRDE) commissioned Campbell to undertake a study aimed at determining:

> 1. The extent, patterning and significance of teacher loss within the State Government schools in Australia;
> 2. the reasons for this loss;
> 3. the levels of morale, and associated variables, within the teaching service.
>
> Campbell (1975:1)

Various techniques of data collection were employed but at the most inclusive level, 1920 teachers (320 from each of the six states) were asked to complete a teacher questionnaire.

Several findings of the Campbell inquiry which are pertinent to our own are briefly summarised:

(a) Campbell identified those groups of teachers who are 'at risk'. Many Australian teachers are young and therefore inexperienced in their profession. These teachers have few professional resources of their own with which to meet the challenge of providing an appropriate education for adolescents. Many older teachers, who were initially trained for primary schools but who are now teaching in the secondary sector without having undergone any further training, also experience difficulties. Because of lack of qualifications they are denied promotion. Together with married women teachers returning to the profession, they find that there are limited provisions made to facilitate in-service education programs which they so badly need.

(b) In contrast to the earlier reports by visiting educationalists which have deplored the role of 'The Department' in decision making within the classroom, Campbell found that teachers now enjoy a high measure of authority in determining objectives, curricula, and teaching methods. However, teachers apparently disregard unclear and incompatible expectations regarding the role of teachers which come from the community.

Campbell notes:

> A well-established cliche...is that education is a cooperative venture of parents, teachers and children, but in practice, the two adult partners have only limited and shallow interaction, and the use of community resources by the teachers is negligible.
>
> Campbell (1975:33)

(c) The authoritarian style of discipline is favoured by most teachers. Campbell found, in particular, that in Queensland and New South Wales teachers say that they favour strategies of 'strict control' and 'good, old-fashioned discipline'. Parents also apparently are in harmony with a 'tough line' approach. In contrast Campbell notes (p. 23): '...teachers describe the ideal relationship with their pupils as involving mutual trust and respect, absence of fear, and warmth and friendliness...'.

(d) It is not surprising, perhaps, that a substantial proportion of teachers report that 'the attitude of pupils makes my job impossible'.

(e) In the area of teaching conditions, teachers believe that many buildings are inappropriate for modern-style teaching and have inadequate facilities. Large size classes and a dearth of resource personnel were also big concerns of teachers.

(f) Teachers see colleagues as friendly, cooperative, helpful and understanding but the relationship tends to be social rather than a deep professional one.

(g) Satisfactions of teaching are intrinsic to the work in the classrooms, e.g. helping pupils grow, developing deeper understanding of subject matter as a result of imparting it to others and interacting with people.

(h) Campbell gained the impression that:

> ...Whereas these Australian teachers take delight in measurable achievement by their pupils, they can understand and tolerate lack of achievement. They feel threatened, however, when their pupils do not display any academic enthusiasm, and are inclined to attribute this to a deliberate flaunting of authority and frustration of legitimate education goals.
>
> Campbell (1975:48)

Fitzgerald et al. (1976:61) also found that teachers display little interest in responding to local community needs: '...teachers concentrate their professional expectations and their aspirations upon the work task and this tends to exclude parents and other citizens from school affairs'. It seemed to these authors that the most salient characteristics of teachers' views of their role was the degree to which their expectations were school-centred. Fitzgerald and his co-authors also drew attention to the tendency for teachers to accept existing organisational structures:

> Generally speaking teachers take the administration activities of the principal and other administrators very much for granted. The main concern of teachers lies with the curriculum and classroom.
>
> Fitzgerald et al. (1976:57)

Overseas writers indicate that the problem is not restricted to Australia. Ferge reached similar conclusions from an interview of 800 teachers in Budapest, and she outlined several consequences of teachers' classroom-centred attitudes:

> Teachers' horizons tend to be limited; the school, the boundary of their everyday lives encloses them. They pay scant attention to the social factors that act upon the school, the children, and themselves; they barely see that everything that happens in school, everything that the school represents, has direct and indirect, short-term and long-term social effects.
>
> Ferge (1972:21)

Silberman, who utilised U.S. studies for his publication, is optimistic that change in the school is possible, for as he bluntly puts it:

> ...what is mostly wrong with the public schools is due not to venality or indifference or stupidity, but to mindlessness...it is because it simply never occurs to more than a handful to ask why they are doing what they are doing - to think seriously or deeply about the purposes or consequences of education
>
> Silberman (1970:10-11)

Members of the recent National Inquiry into Teacher Education (1980) have recognised the need for teachers to broaden their horizons both personally and professionally. They believe that teacher education should be seen as continual professional development and identify a range of personal and professional qualities that each teacher should strive to acquire.

One serious outcome of the unwillingness of Australian teachers to respond to community needs has been the laggard rate of response of the schools to the migrant presence (Martin, 1976: 1978):

> During the first twenty years of post-war migration, only a few isolated teachers and others saw the question of the education of children of non-English-speaking origin as a problem in its own right.
>
> Martin (1976:61)

Martin claimed that educational bureaucracies played a crucial part: they expressed the temper of the times in refusing to confront the fact that the presence of migrants of non-English-speaking origin had, in fact, changed the nature of the schools and the scope of their own role. Martin was hopeful, however, that teachers would lead the way towards an education system which would help all children to live in a multicultural society.

> By virtue of their professional training and the norms operating in educational institutions, teachers and other school professionals can claim to be heard on education questions, even when administrative hierarchies are obstructive and refuse to listen. With an increase in school and teacher autonomy, their claims may extend to the control of what happens in schools and some teachers have taken advantage of their new freedom to develop their own response to the migrant problem; in communicating their experience through the readily available channels of education journals and conferences, some of them have helped crystallise and give substance to the challenge to established structures.
>
> Martin (1978:210)

We cannot explore these issues further here. Readers interested in in-depth analyses of the complex issues involved are referred to the two publications by Martin.

Teachers' Survey

A total of 637 teachers responded to our teacher questionnaire; 55 per cent of respondents were females and 45 per cent were males. Nineteen per cent of those who responded held positions of subject master or above. The response rate of completion of the questionnaires varied markedly among the schools and response rates ranged from 31 per cent to 97 per cent - there were six schools with a response rate greater than 80 per cent and three schools with a response rate between 30 and 40 per cent. The overall response rate was 66 per cent.

Preliminary broad analyses of these data were undertaken by Sheppard (1978). However, for this report we re-analysed the data so as to include fine distinctions among the categories used to classify responses to the question, 'What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?' We acknowledge that our question deliberately focuses on problems of teachers and that we did not include any questions in the teacher questionnaire on the 'good things' of school. We also asked teachers to respond to the question: 'What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?' This question exactly parallels the one we asked students and enables us to test how accurately teachers perceive student problems. At the end of the questionnaire, we invited teachers to make any comments they wished. Eleven teachers responded to this invitation and their responses are shown below.

Teachers' Problems - Discussion of Results

The most frequently cited problems for teachers were students (Tables 42 and 43). The next most frequent main problem categories mentioned in descending order were: organisational factors at a school level; teaching duties; and the department, system, hierarchy.

Case studies were developed for the 11 teachers who made comments in addition to their responses to the question on problems of teenagers and problems of secondary teachers. The 11 teachers were evenly spread across the schools, coming from 10 out of the 16 schools in the sample. We do not claim that they are representative of the 637 teachers who responded to the questionnaire, but their responses do enable us to gain some insights into teacher perceptions of the school experience.

In earlier case studies we typed students' comments exactly as they

TABLE 42

TEACHERS' COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WHICH SECONDARY TEACHERS TODAY HAVE TO OVERCOME?'

By Age

Category under discussion	Total %	Born after 1951 %	Born 1941-50 %	Born 1931-40 %	Born before 1931 %
Summary by age					
Students	29	32	27	26	34
Organisational factors at a school level	23	22	25	20	21
Teaching duties	19	22	19	19	12
The Department, system, hierarchy	10	10	11	11	5
Professional development	9	6	10	11	13
Parents, community, society	7	4	6	9	12
Self, other teachers	3	4	2	3	3
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100

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TABLE 43

TEACHERS' COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WHICH SECONDARY TEACHERS TODAY HAVE TO OVERCOME?'

(N = 637) (a)

Comments in rank order	N (b)	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
Students			
Lack of: self-discipline, respect, manners; aggressiveness, poor behaviour	256	51	16
Apathy, lack of interest, motivation concerning school work, lack of conviction of the relevance of school	143	28	8
Lack of basic skills, unable to: learn, understand	53	11	3
Negative attitudes to school (unqualified)	26	5	2
Negative influence on each other, lack of empathy between (personal/racial)	12	2	1
Other	13	3	1
Sub-total	**503**	**100**	**(29)**
Organisational factors at a school level			
Overcrowding, large classes, lack of space	125	32	7
Lack of: resources, facilities for teaching, funds, good textbooks; poor conditions	112	29	7
Lack of time for: preparation of lessons, marking, assessment	96	25	6
Excessive period load, volume of teaching-related work	23	6	1
Volume of: work unrelated to teaching, administrative work	23	6	1
Miscellaneous comments (constant interruptions, rigidity of time-tabling, lack of time for extra curricular activities)	9	2	1
Sub-total	**388**	**100**	**(23)**
Teaching duties			
Making information relevant to: students, society's needs	140	42	8
Understanding, rapport, learn to talk with students, gaining student acceptance	92	28	5
Developing an effective style, class management, class teaching, coping with teacher–student conflict	38	11	2
Deciding what aspects to emphasise, balance between drill and innovation	21	6	1
Establishing, maintaining academic standards	14	4	1
Teaching migrant students	12	4	1
Developing student self-awareness, preparing students for future responsibilities	10	3	1
Coping with students' emotional problems	7	2	..
Sub-total	**334**	**100**	**(19)**

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TABLE 43 (Continued)

TEACHERS' COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WHICH SECONDARY TEACHERS TODAY HAVE TO OVERCOME?'

Comments in rank order	NC	% of total comments in this area	% of grand total of all comments in all areas
The Department, system, hierarchy			
Bureaucracy, red tape, the Department, the system	44	26	3
Rigid, conservative: school administration, organisation	29	17	2
Role conflict caused by the system	28	16	2
Authoritarian hierarchy, intrusion of school hierarchy on teaching functions, school inspectors	25	15	1
Lack of: direction from, liaison with the Department	19	11	1
Poor, inconsistent school: administration, organisation, lack of support from senior staff	17	10	1
Other	9	5	1
Sub-total	168	100	(10)
Professional development			
Keeping abreast of change in: education, curriculum, teaching techniques; lack of time; for professional reading, research study	132	85	8
Inadequate: teacher training, training for lower stream, in-service training	23	15	1
Sub-total	155	100	(9)
Parents, community, society			
Parental, community apathy concerning school	36	31	2
Change, decline in social: standards, attitudes, expectations; mercenary social values, teaching in a permissive society, breakdown of the family unit	30	26	2
Lack of community acceptance of school; conflict between parent and school: values, expectations	25	21	1
Advertising, competition with the media	20	17	1
Lack of interaction between home and school	6	5	..
Sub-total	117	100	(7)
Self, other teachers			
Lack of professionalism, professional ethics	35	63	2
Lack of: self-confidence, commitment, motivation, interest	21	38	1
Sub-total	56	100	(3)
TOTAL	1,722	–	100

(a) There were 1,722 comments offered by 637 teachers i.e. if a particular teacher made three comments, these were recorded opposite the relevant category.

(b) NC refers to numbers of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

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were presented to us and, to be even-handed, we have adopted the same procedures with teachers' comments, i.e. spelling errors are faithfully reproduced! Ficticious names are used throughout.

Case Studies - Teachers' Problems

Ms June Holroyd, age group: 25-30. Ms Holroyd was born in Australia. She has a B.A. Dip. Ed. and is a four-year trained assistant teacher at Oxford Girls' High School. She has taught for 4-6 years.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. peer group pressures,
2. boy-girl relationships,
3. vocational choices for future.

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. How much work is enough. (Preparation, new approaches etc.),
2. What to teach when faced with liberal syllabi,
3. How to confront students who don't have the 'ability' yet want to continue to Year 12.

Other Comments

> Peer group pressures - in my experience, this is becoming worse, manifested in the pupils difficulty in choosing whether to work for own goals (if any), or whether to go with the crowd. Year 10 face this particularly, when they want to continue schooling, but have an irredeemable past record! This exists (regardless of nationality) for the majority.
>
> For the 'real' teacher, the more work you do, the more there is to do, especially in English/History. Thus homework, home marking can become a great task and burden.

Mr Ralph Landy, age group: 25-30. Mr Landy was born in the United States and arrived in Australia when he was 21-25 years old. He has a B.A. and Teachers' Certificate and is employed as a four-year trained assistant teacher at Holywell Co-Ed High School. He has three years or less teaching experience.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. Excessive peer group pressure,
2. Excessive parental control - gaining self-reliance. (Responsibility),
3. Physical and psycological changes.

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. Lack of empathy and understanding of teenagers (Communication),
2. Conviction in relivancy of subject area or even formal universal education,
3. Co-equal respect (love).

Other Comments

Holywell Co-Ed. High does not seem to suffer from a lack of funds material and equipment, rather these things need to be employed with firmer education goals in mind. Perhaps a little more attention for 'average' and 'below average' students rather than so many recources tied up with senior students.

Mr Gerry Nolan, age group 46-50. Mr Nolan was born in Australia. He has a B.A. Dip. Ed. and is employed as a four-year trained subject master at Blackstone Boys' High School. He has taught for more than 16 years.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. Work load,
2. Language deficiencies,
3. Society and peer group pressures.

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. Apathy,
2. Language deficiencies,
3. Societal distractions.

Other Comments

Teaching is made difficult by the lack of good text books. History text books in New South Wales are badly written, whether by academics or teachers. Similarly, English is difficult to teach because of the dearth of good critical material available to school students.

Perhaps the worst deficiency is the field of slow learning and migrant education.

Ms Janet James, age group: 25-30. Ms James was born in Australia. She has a B.Sc., Dip. Ed. and is employed as a four-year trained assistant teacher at Gibbsville Boys' High. She has taught for 4-6 years.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. Lack of guidance and discipline at home,
2. Coping with different expectations in society,
3. Lack of preparation for future, uncertainty.

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. Discipline problems in classroom,
2. Rigidity of school hierachy,
3. Lack of time to prepare work to satisfy own standard and still lead full family life, (with only ordinary amounts of energy).

Other Comments

Migrant children have greater problems coping with school and society. Not enough help with language is offered at school. Australian society unable to cope with 'differences' makes kids feel unacceptable and ashamed of background.

Ms Patricia James, age group: 31-35 years. Ms James was born in Australia. She has a Teachers' Certificate and is employed as a three-year trained assistant teacher at Endeavour Hills Girls' High School. She has taught for 7-9 years.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. Pressure of peer groups and media toward the permissive society,
2. Lack of parental interest in activities,
3. Lack of communication with adults and community.

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. Effective discipline,
2. Oversized classes,
3. Lack of support and understanding from the community.

Other Comments

As a teacher of Home Science with experience in two states I find teaching has become more difficult for the following reasons:

1. Inability to carry out effective discipline when necessary because of lack of backing from senior members of staff, parents and the Education Department.
2. Too rigid programming to allow for varying interests and abilities of both students and staff.
3. Emphasis on 'academic' subjects with little recognition of achievements by students in practical subjects.
4. Decline in the standard of teaching and pupil teacher relationships possibly caused by frequent transfers of staff and insufficient incentive to attract and keep a balance of competent male and female teachers.

Ms Cheryl Jones, age group: 21-25 years. Ms Jones was born in Australia. She has a Teachers' Certificate and is employed as a three-year trained assistant teacher at Silversquare Girls' High School. She has taught for 3 years or less.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. Confusion resulting from double standard - child/adult,
2. Group pressure - peer demands,
3. Restrictions of present school system!

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. Restrictions of present school system,
2. Breaking barriers to communication caused by pupil/teacher role,
3. Finding material to stimulate.

Other Comments

By 'restrictions of present school system' I mean:

(a) Large numbers - which directly effects the whole organisation of the school and leads to the following points:

(b) Rigid timetabling - bells chopping any activity,

(c) Limited opportunity for various activities to proceed concurrently within the one class - which allows for greater individual attention, students' progressing at own pace, development of pupil/teacher relationship etc.

(d) Tendency of teachers to concentrate too much on the administrative - control/discipline aspects of the school experience.

(e) Development of an 'Us Vs Them' syndrome which breaks down any TRUST that should exist between pupils and teachers. Relaxation of rigid control suggesting to many, an open invitation to anarchy.

Mr Paul Warwick, age group: 21-25 years. Mr Warwick was born in Australia. He has a B.A. (Hons.) Dip. Ed. and is employed as a five-year trained assistant teacher at Henly Park Girls' High School. He has taught for 3 years or less.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. A realisation of their own position in society,
2. Their inability to shape in any way their learning environment,
3. The middle/upper class nature of N.S.W. education, causing bias against working class kids.

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. The restriction of conforming to a bourgeois education system,

2. Resulting from (1), the allienation from the kids,

3. The inflexible nature of the work routine.

Other Comments

> Despite all the exciting concepts of how schools might be changed and improved I have come to the firm conclusion that the problem is not essentially an educational one; but a socio-economic/class one (see the work of Herb Gintis and Sam Bowles).
>
> Any changes made in the class room level can only be patchwork jobs. The real changes can only stem from a major restructuring of the economic and class basis of our society. To think otherwise is to be misguided by middleclass bullshit. Whatever I do in my (our) classroom will probably not change to any degree the life-experience of these working class kids.
>
> Your work may point up some of the problems but I doubt if it will show many directions for improvement (i.e. most bilingual people in Australia work in other factories and are not even allow into our schools).

Ms Lenore Taft, age group: 25-30 years. Ms Taft was born in Australia. She holds a Teachers' Certificate and is a three-year trained assistant teacher at Snowfield School. She has been teaching for 4-6 years.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. Peer group pressure,

2. Emotional security,

3. Occupying time in valuable ways.

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. Conflicts of working in hierchical structure,

2. Constant changes, no time to adjust or prepare,

3. Personal working conditions.

Other Comments

> The size of the school causes a great deal of problems of staff and pupils. e.g. large staff never agree, co-operate, or have unity that smaller schools have. Pupils get away with more and therefore overlooked.

Mr Kirk Mitchum, age group: 21-25 years. Mr Mitchum was born in the United States and came to Australia when he was 21-25 years old. He has a B.A., and a B. of Music Education and is a four-year trained assistant teacher at Nelson High School. He has taught for 3 years or less.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. The striving for social and peer group acceptance,
2. Learning and developing good study habits,
3. Realizing the necessity of education.

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. Learning to communicate with students,
2. Keeping up to-date in their fields,
3. Realizing they are 'professionals'.

Other Comments

I do feel that many teachers and students are very unwilling to put time in outside normal school hours and feel that even though a great deal of learning takes place in the classroom, both the student and the teacher learn far more by interaction, and practical application of experiences outside the school. This is where they learn:

1. Committment to a given project;
2. How to work, get along and respond to their peer group and their teachers, on one to one basis, each knowing the other is an individual, having different ideas and talents;
3. Responsibility - by taking a position where work must be completed on a deadline;
4. Leadership and followingship - both are important. The willingness of teachers and students to take command of a given work or situation - and grow through it; and the willingness of individuals to follow, and gain and understand the meaning of respect - for people as individuals, whether it be student to teacher, or vice versa.

Ms Jane Oswald, age group: 21-25 years. Ms Oswald was born in England, but she arrived in Australia before she was 11 years old. She has a Diploma of Art Education, and is employed as a four-year trained assistant teacher at Endeavour Hills Girls' High School. She has taught for 3 years or less.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. Influence of the media on their standards and expectations,
2. Confusion caused for Education Department exam policies,
3. Sexism and prejudice in education.

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. Lack of self discipline in the students,
2. Lack of literacy skills in children,
3. Lack of co-ordination of aims in Education Department policies.

Other Comments

In education it is not only migrant children who have problems, it often seems to be just as problematical with Australian born children, who for reasons other than native language cannot read or write in English, nor verbally communicate as well as would be hoped. As much stress is needed on this problem as on the migrant child in education.

Mr Peter Stanley, age group: 31-35 years. Mr Stanley was born in Australia. He has a B.Sc. App., and a Teachers' Certificate. He is employed as a five-year trained subject master, at Evans Park High School, and has been a teacher for 13-15 years.

What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?

1. Parental attitudes and expectations,
2. Suitable choice of career and associated school subjects,
3. Poorly trained beginner teachers.

What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome?

1. Outdated cirriculum in some fields i.e. Maths,
2. Different expectations of child and parent to that of

teacher,

3. Diminished respect for school.

Other Comments

> I have been a careers' advisor in schools for five years and have found that the choice of subjects made greatly limits or enhances the prospects of later careers. Schools seem to becoming too specialized and this is causing difficulty with later choice especially future uni' students. They find that the faculty they want insists on certain pre-requisites.
>
> The lower stream (not GA or DA's) are poorly looked after. They tend to get the less experienced teachers, e.g. I taught lower stream classes only for my first five years. As a Master I am worried that school is not providing a real educational experience for these less able pupils. Perhaps these are the pupils who should have a vocational education in third or fourth form (Years 9 and 10) and perhaps some work experience in industry. The Department of Labour (Commonwealth) finds these people hardest to place and the first laid-off. Thus these pupils see school as a place to excape from and their teachers only encourage them to go so life will be easier for them.

Teachers' Problems - Discussion of Results

Students

The main comments concerned: students' lack of self-discipline, apathy, lack of interest in and motivation in school work, lack of respect and manners, lack of basic skills, negative attitudes to school, negative influence on each other, aggressiveness, poor behaviour and poor home life (Table 43). Of the 503 responses which referred to students, 399 related to lack of self-discipline, apathy, lack of interest and motivation. Ten per cent of comments referring to students mentioned students' lack of basic skills, which points to a need for an increased emphasis on remedial teaching in schools.

Teachers over fifty years old cited students as problems more frequently than the young teachers (Table 42). Perhaps this is due to the fact that senior teachers are more involved with disciplinary aspects of school administration. However, teachers under twenty-five years of age also found students more of a problem than their slightly older colleagues did - probably due to lack of classroom experience.

Teachers in the case studies drew attention to the adverse effects of the increased peer pressure being faced by today's teenagers. But many students also face academic problems. Some who decide that they want to remain at school to gain their HSC may find it impossible to live down their 'irredeemable past record' as one teacher puts it. Teachers pointed out that students need to develop better self-discipline but gave no lead as to how this should be achieved. They also mentioned that a number of students lacked the necessary literacy skills to cope with secondary school work. One teacher expressed the view that schools provided too many resources for the senior students who were preparing for tertiary entrance, at the expense of the 'average' and 'below average' students. Teachers reported that schools were not providing a real educational experience for the less able students. In some instances it appears that the lower streams were allocated the young, inexperienced teachers, and required to undertake courses more suited to the academic type of student. However, as one careers adviser warned, special courses for such students could limit their future educational options.

Organisational Factors at a School Level

The next most frequently mentioned problem was school organisation (Table 43). Large classes, lack of space, lack of various resources, lack of time for lesson preparation and marking, the volume of administrative work and excessive teaching loads were all raised as problems. A relatively large number of teachers cited organisational factors at school level such as overcrowding, large classes, lack of space, lack of resources, poor facilities; 237 such comments form quite a serious body of opinion, given known and anticipated cuts to government funding for education. Organisational factors at a school level are seen as a problem by proportionally more women than men teachers (27 per cent and 18 per cent respectively). The incidence of such comment was fairly consistent among teachers of all ages (Table 42).

The case studies elaborated some of the consequences of overcrowding and large classes - timetabling has to be inflexible, and it is difficult to arrange small group activities because of the problems of space and noise. It is also difficult to provide individual attention for students with particular problems.

Teaching Duties

Almost half the comments relating to teaching duties addressed the problem of making information relevant to students' and society's needs (Table 43). One question needs to be mentioned because of its low response. Only seven comments made reference to coping with students' emotional problems. Teachers were aware of their need to develop greater empathy with their students through improved communication, but it appears this was often made difficult by a tradition of mutual distrust associated with the roles of teacher and pupil.

One of the teachers in the case studies suggested that this might best be overcome in the one-to-one contact possible during extra-curriculum activities, wherein teachers and students see each other, not as players of roles, but as individuals, each able to make their own contribution to a project.

Teachers in the case studies mentioned the problem of selecting materials which would stimulate student interest. One complained about the suitability of available textbooks especially for migrants and slow learners.

There were 12 comments which referred to teaching migrant students as a problem. Although these teachers complained that migrant children were not given enough language help at school, they recognised that the roots of the problem lay far deeper. One teacher aptly summed up the situation: 'The failure of Australian society to cope with "differences" makes the children feel unacceptable and ashamed of their background.'

In the sample of 637 teachers, 7 per cent had received training in teaching English as a second language (ESL) and 12 per cent had some experience in ESL. These proportions are quite low when it is realised that our sample of schools is weighted towards schools of high migrant density.

We also asked teachers the following question: 'Do you think that children of non-English speaking migrant parents should have the opportunity to learn the language of their parents?'

Forty per cent of teachers agreed, 44 per cent thought that this type of study should be pursued outside normal high school hours, 11 per cent were indifferent and 5 per cent thought that migrant students should have no opportunity at all to learn their parents' language. One teacher, who was born in Australia and teaches industrial arts, made the following comment in support of his answer:

> Being in a predominantly English speaking country that is very isolated I see no point in learning a language unless a particular individual has a purpose in mind, e.g. overseas trips or communicating with overseas subsidiary companies. I find it no reflection on me or my profession that I have not chosen to learn another language.
>
> A few more immigrants should be learning English so they can help their children. The biggest problem young children with migrant parents have is the change in language from their parents' language to what is taught at school.

The teacher response is disappointingly negative, and when coupled with the response to teaching community languages above, leads to the conclusion that there are a number of teachers who are a long way from accepting the notion that the multicultural nature of our Australian society should be reflected in the classroom.

Teaching duties as a problem is mentioned less frequently by teachers over 50 (Table 42). As we have previously noted, many of these teachers would be in administrative rather than teaching positions, reflecting the situation in Australian schools whereby experienced teachers are promoted out of the classroom.

To sum up, teachers specifically cited 'relevance', 'communicating with students' and 'gaining acceptance' as problems. There was real concern about the lack of a social/caring/trusting climate of mutuality which provides the optimum conditions in which learning can and should take place. In all, the picture that emerged falls short of the ideal which should include high morale on the part of teaching staff, motivated eager students and committed teachers working in conditions that support and encourage a sound learning climate.

The Department, System, Hierarchy

There were 169 comments directed towards the 'system' (Table 43). The words that teachers used to describe these problems are well documented in the literature on Australian educational systems: bureaucracy, red-tape, rigid, conservative, authoritarian hierarchy. Teachers in the case studies felt that teaching is made more difficult because of the lack of backing that classroom teachers get from senior members of staff, parents and the Education Department. They also felt that their position is made difficult because of lack of communication about the aims of Education Department policies. Teachers over 50 raised 'system' problems less frequently than other teachers (Table 42).

Professional Development

Nine per cent of the comments referred to professional development as a problem (Table 43). It is interesting to note that the incidence of those citing professional development as a problem was higher among the older teachers (Table 42). The main burden of complaint in this area referred to keeping abreast of change in educational curricula, and lack of time for reading and professional study. Male teachers cited these problems more frequently than female (11 per cent and 7 per cent respectively). While this could indicate greater professional ambition among the men, it could simply be a reflection of the greater proportion of young teachers in the female sample.

Parents, Community, Society

Teachers cited lack of parental support for schools and the breakdown of social standards and family influence as problems (Table 43). They also commented on the lack of community acceptance of school, conflict between parents and school and the lack of interaction between home and school. Teachers in the case studies also mentioned that the expectations of parents and children regarding schooling sometimes differed from those of the teachers. However, they offered no suggestions about how to negotiate a consensus. Another teacher pointed out the danger of thinking of the school in isolation from society and deluding ourselves that school reform can reform society.

Older teachers more frequently mentioned problems related to the attitudes and standards of parents, the community and society as a whole (Table 42).

Self, Other Teachers

Over half of the comments which referred to self and/or other teachers were addressed to the problems of a lack of professionalism and professional ethics. Eight comments referred to lack of self-confidence among teachers and comments were also made about a lack of commitment, motivation and interest among teachers.

Teachers' View of Teenagers' Problems - Discussion of Results

The results of teachers' responses to the question, 'What are the three most difficult problems which teenagers today have to overcome?' are shown in Table 44. Table 45 gives a rank order comparison of the teachers' perceptions and those of their students. Students' responses are shown in Table 2 page 43. 'The development of personal independence' occurred in first place for both teacher and student responses. This category made up 46 per cent of the students' comments and 30 per cent of the teachers' comments. It includes: problems of achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults, selecting and preparing for an occupation, the problem of achieving financial independence, and various problems associated with the transition to adulthood, such as finding a purpose in life, and the development of self-confidence. Teachers' awareness of these problems may offer hope for changes in curricula, to assist students in dealing with them more effectively.

The development of socially responsible behaviour was ranked in second place in the student response table. Fifteen per cent of all student comments referred to the problems which are associated with drugs, smoking, alcohol, crime, or clashes with police. These problems were mentioned in only 7 per cent of the teachers' comments. Problems of relationships within the adolescent peer group and problems related to school were ranked third and fourth respectively in the student response table and second and third respectively in the teacher table. Comparatively more teachers than students saw pressure towards conformity within the peer group as a problem (Tables 2 and 44). As might be expected, teachers identified a wider range of

TABLE 44

TEACHER COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WHICH TEENAGERS TODAY HAVE TO OVERCOME?'

(N = 637)(a)

Category	Total sample	
	NC (b)	%
Relationships with the adolescent peer group (V1)		
The problem of achieving new and more mature relationships with age mates of both sexes:		
Socialisation with peers	72	4
The problem of achieving a masculine or feminine social role:		
Sex	24	1
The pressure of conformity with the peer groups:		
The problems of whether or not to conform	190	11
Sub-total (V1)	**286**	(17)
The problem of accepting one's body (V2)		
Physical appearance and health problems	23	1
Sub-total (V2)	**23**	(1)
Development of personal independence (V3)		
The problem of achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults:		
The desire for independence	39	2
Getting on with parents	113	7
Problems with the family	37	2
Relationships with the older generation: communication, discrimination	40	2
The problems of achieving assurance of economic independence:		
The desire for financial independence	16	1
Selecting and preparing for an occupation:		
The effects of increased unemployment	62	4
Lack of meaningful work opportunities	22	1
Difficulties of selecting job	70	4
Acquiring vocational skills	16	1
Maturing		
Difficulties of coping with adulthood	36	2
Finding a goal in life	49	3
Developing self-confidence	18	1
Sub-total (V3)	**508**	(30)
The development of socially responsible behaviour (V4)		
Moral issues and personal attributes perceived as negative qualities	79	5
Drugs, alcohol, smoking	38	2
Sub-total (V4)	117	(7)
Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour (V5)		
Understanding and self-expression	78	5
Concern about the future of oneself	27	2
Acquiring standards	61	4
Sub-total (V5)	116	(10)
Problems related to the use of leisure (V6)		
Boredom, desire to go out, lack of entertainment	50	3
Achieving a balance between work and leisure	11	1
Sub-total (V6)	61	(4)

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TABLE 44 (Continued)

TEACHER COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WHICH TEENAGERS TODAY HAVE TO OVERCOME?'

(N = 637)(a)

Category	Total sample	
	NC	%
Problems related to school (V7)		
The institution	14	1
Problems concerning: homework, study, exams	44	3
Relationship with teachers	28	2
Lack of basic language skills	30	2
Poor attitude, lack of motivation towards education	85	5
Work too academic, subject choice too narrow	28	2
Lack of power	5	..
Other school related problems	5	..
Sub-total (V7)	239	(14)
Problems of learning to socialise (V8)	5	..
Coping with society (V9)		
Problems of competitive, materialistic, technological society	30	2
Radicalism	70	4
Lack of role in society	4	..
Discrimination	17	1
Coping with the media	73	4
Sub-total (V9)	194	(11)
Poor influence of parents (V10)		
Pampering by parents	5	..
Lack of parental interest or poor home educational standards	74	4
Sub-total (V10)	79	(5)
GRAND TOTAL	1,688	100

(a) Some respondents did not mention three problems. The average numbers of responses per respondent was 2.6.

(b) NC refers to number of comments (i.e. it does not refer to number of students).

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TABLE 45

RANK ORDER OF MAJOR CATEGORIES OF TEACHER AND STUDENT COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: 'WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WHICH TEENAGERS TODAY HAVE TO OVERCOME?'

Rank Order	Student	% of cmts	Teacher	% of cmts
1.	Development of personal independence	46	Development of personal independence	30
2.	The development of socially responsible behaviour (drugs, smoking, alcohol, police, crime)	15	Relationships with the adolescent peer group	17
3.	Relationships with the adolescent peer group	12	Problems related to school	14
4.	Problems related to school	10	Coping with society (a)	11
5.	Problems related to the use of leisure	6	Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour	10
6.	The problem of accepting one's body	3	The development of socially responsible behaviour	7
7.	Community problems which teenagers are concerned about (c)	3	Poor influence of parents (b)	5
8.	Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour	2	Problems related to the use of leisure	4
9.	Problems of learning to socialise	1	The problem of accepting one's body	1
10.	Uncoded	..	Problems of learning to socialise	..
TOTAL PERCENTAGE:		100		100

(a)(b) These categories were not mentioned by the students.

(c) The students mentioned community problems from an attitude of objective concern, whereas the teachers mentioned aspects of society with which teenagers had difficulty coping. Students saw the poor influence of parents at the subjective level of 'getting on with parents'.

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school 'problems' than did students. The latter were mainly concerned about the organisation of the school with respect to timetables, classes and discipline, the workload of homework and the pressure of examinations, and relationships with teachers. Teachers also recognised these as problems but, in addition, teachers referred to students' lack of motivation, and their lack of basic skills, and the fact that school work was too academic (Table 44).

While only 3 per cent of student comments referred to community problems which they felt concerned about, 11 per cent of the teacher comments referred to aspects of society which they felt made it difficult for teenagers to cope. Materialism, radicalism, and technological changes are probably more obvious to teachers who have the hindsight gained from experience.

Ten per cent of teachers' comments referred to problems that teenagers have in developing a set of values and an ethical system which will serve them as a guide to behaviour. As this category was mentioned in only 2 per cent of the students' comments, it would seem that this is a developmental task which few of them have yet recognised as a problem. Despite teachers' concern, it is also one for which schools, as yet, appear to offer little preparation.

Five per cent of teacher comments referred to the poor influence of parents. Teachers in the case studies mentioned excessive parental control and lack of parental interest. Others referred to poor home educational standards and excessive pampering by some parents. No students referred to these aspects directly - they probably saw them at the more subjective level of 'problems in getting on with parents'.

Percentages in the remaining categories were low for both students and teachers, so percentage differences were minimal. However, two specific aspects are worth mentioning. Two per cent of all student comments referred to pimples - but this was not mentioned by any teacher. Similarly, 130 students mentioned problems associated with the need for transport but no teacher referred to it. Overall, problems related to the use of leisure, and problems related to 'accepting one's body' are ranked in the fifth and sixth places respectively in the student table, while they are ranked eighth and ninth in the teacher table. The rank order differences indicate some variations in perceptions of problems in these areas. Perhaps teachers are less aware of these teenage problems which lie 'beyond the horizons of the classroom'. However, the Queensland report of the Commission of Inquiry Into Youth (1975:8) noted: 'For many young people the factor which most seriously restricts their use of leisure time is inadequate public transport.' Our results indicate that a similar situation probably exists in Sydney.

Although variations occurred in the emphases that teachers and students placed on several teenage problems, it is important not to lose sight of the high degree of consensus between the two groups. Seventy-three per cent of the students' comments refer to problems related to the development of personal independence, relationships within the adolescent peer group, and school. Sixty-one per cent of the teachers' comments also referred to these topics.

Summary and Discussion

One of our aims in this chapter was to identify whether there was a lack of congruence between the two accreditation functions of school, i.e. that of accrediting teachers for employment and promotion on the one hand, and that of accrediting students for further education courses and occupations on the other. Following our restricted survey of teacher perceptions in which we focused mainly on 'problems', we are able to add to our earlier discussion. First, teachers did not raise teacher accreditation problems as such but a number commented about problems of the 'system', using terms such as: bureaucracy, red tape, conservative, authoritarian hierarchy, role conflict and so on. Second, our investigation has shown that tensions do exist between some teachers and students. Teachers mentioned more problems in relation to students than any other category. Teachers used terms such as: lack of self-discipline, lack of respect, aggressiveness, apathy, lack of conviction of the relevance of school, lack of basic skills and negative attitudes to school, to describe students.

Our findings are substantially in harmony with the description of the school we have enunciated in the institutional ideology but the evidence is largely circumstantial. If a major function of the school is to accredit bright students and 'cool out' the less bright, then some students are likely to become alienated and tensions are likely to occur between some teachers and students. Our investigation has unearthed such tensions and alienations. Some teachers, at least, appear to be disenchanted with the interactions they have with the Department on the one hand, and equally disenchanted with the interactions they have with rebellious, uninterested students on the other. In fact there were 26 teachers who mentioned specifically 'role conflict caused by the system' as one problem of teachers. However, our findings include elements which conflict with and challenge the perspective of the institutional ideology. For example, some teachers attempt to make information relevant to both the student's and society's needs. We can also infer from our findings that a number of teachers seek to understand students, learn to talk with students and gain their acceptance. Our dual analyses of teachers' and students' perceptions of students' problems have revealed, in the main, that teachers are most perceptive of students' problems. We also note that there were 23 teachers who mentioned inadequate teacher training and, in particular, training for the lower stream as a problem of secondary teachers.

We now turn to a discussion of two of the sets of propositions outlined in Chapter 2 which relate to interactions among students, teachers and parents.

Propositions

9A Teachers are accountable to the Education Department.
They have the freedom to exercise professional autonomy in their work.

9B Teachers defer to the Education Department on all matters of educational policy.
They bow to formal bureaucratic rules and do not have freedom to exercise professional autonomy.

12A Authentic interactions occur among students, teachers and parents whereby the interests of each are valued and respected.

12B The interests and identities of students, teachers and parents are defined by others and their conceptions of their own experience devalued or ignored.

As our questionnaire focused mainly on problems of teachers, we can only discuss these propositions in a general way. If we had asked an additional question about the 'good things' of school, we may have unearthed examples of authentic interactions. From the evidence we do have, we can conclude that a number of teachers identified problems concerned with the Department, system hierarchy. Similarly, teachers commented on such aspects as parental, community apathy concerning school, lack of community acceptance of school and lack of interaction between home and school.

When we consider these indicators in conjunction with the analyses of students' perceptions and parents' perceptions outlined in earlier chapters, we find reason to suspect that student-teacher-parent interactions in the 'real' school system are more accurately described by propositions 9B and 12B than by 9A and 12A. We return to a discussion of these issues in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS

In this study we surveyed students', teachers' and parents' perceptions of the functions and processes of schooling. Our theoretical approach was influenced by the equality of educational opportunity literature in the early 1970s and the mounting criticisms in Australia relating to the disadvantaged position of migrants of non-English-speaking (NES) background. In the course of the study we utilised these orientations as a springboard to the development of propositions oriented to the secondary schooling experience.

The 'institutional ideology' identifies the education system as, above all, a reality-defining and confirming institution. This ideology grows out of and sustains two systems of accreditation: the accreditation of school personnel for employment and promotion and the accreditation of children which in turn influences their opportunities to enter post-school educational and occupational structures.

We postulated that the school system which accredits children utilises measures of 'brightness' which span an extremely limited range of cognitive abilities and excludes cognitive and non-cognitive capacities that are highly valued in diverse contexts in society. The processes the school uses to conduct the accreditation exercise result in bright children being given every opportunity and encouragement to aspire high and do well. Concurrently the school tries to ensure that less bright children reach a minimum level of competence in literacy and numeracy and steers them away from unrealistic educational and occupational goals.

To the extent that students, teachers, and parents share or agree to 'go along with' these conceptions, the school careers of students will be highly predictable and consistent. But if this congruence does not exist, the connection between brightness, educational opportunity, aspirations/motivation and accreditation will break down, i.e. the dominance of the institutional ideology will be challenged. We outlined three sources of ideas that foster such a challenge: in sex-role differentiation the bright child career is seen as being more appropriate for boys than for girls; in class differentation we find among those in higher class positions an unwillingness to accept the notion that accreditation should depend on brightness, while among those in lower class positions there is scepticism that the bright child career really applies to them; and, in ethnic differentiation, there is the perspective that the socialising role of the school is more important than its role as an accreditation agency, i.e. migrant parents see the school as an agency that will swiftly and effectively teach their child the 'Australian way'.

The dominance of the institutional ideology is also undermined by the incongruence between the school's two accrediting functions. For teachers to be accredited they must preserve order and stability in the classroom. At the same time, they have the job of transforming brightness into aspirations/motivation, performance and accreditation. Tensions and alienations are likely to occur - some bright students reject the school's authority structure and leave school, while less bright students stay on and challenge the insidious cooling-out processes which result as the school steers these latter students away from unrealistic educational goals such as staying on at school until the Higher School Certificate (HSC).

We have argued that it makes a lot of difference whether teachers, students and parents who support, or at least agree to operate on, the institutional ideology do so as the result of a shared understanding of the processes or do so as the result of complete ignorance of what is really happening at school. This report then focuses on students', teachers' and parents' perceptions of schooling. Report No. 3 will take up the issues of aspirations/motivation, performance and accreditation.

We are also concerned in this inquiry with the position of migrant children with NES backgrounds. The migration experience is the central focus in this perspective. Stunting and liberating theories of migration were introduced as alternatives. Stunting theories emphasise those aspects of migrancy that are believed to produce insecurity and so on, while liberating theories direct attention to the fresh vision brought to bear by experienced participants in two cultures.

THE SAMPLE AND THE DATA

From 168 state high schools in the Sydney metropolitan area we selected a stratified cluster sample of 16 schools using school type (boys, girls, coeducational) and NES migrant density as stratifying variables. The 3043 students in the project represented approximately 11 per cent of all Grade 9 students in Sydney state schools. Data were collected over a four year period during which 1715 students left school. We followed up as many of these school leavers as we could trace (63 per cent) by mail questionnaires and telephone. In addition to collecting data directly from students, we interviewed the parents of a sub-sample of approximately 690 of the students. The sub-sample was weighted towards parents of NES origin, many of whom had to be interviewed in their own language. Finally, there were 637 teachers who responded to a questionnaire.

The survey instruments are summarised in Table 1 page 23. The material collected can be grouped into five categories appropriate to the theoretical interests of the investigation: (a) personal and family background; (b) educational performance and accreditation; (c) motivations/ aspirations/ self-concept; (d) school experience; (e) family and extra-school interests and social experience. We focus in this report (Report No. 2) only on those data associated with students', teachers' and parents' perceptions of schooling. The bulk of the results associated with other aspects of the material outlined above is the domain of Report No. 3.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Because an overall aim of the project was to investigate the comparative educational experience of Australian and migrant students, we had to ensure that sufficient numbers of migrant students were included to make this possible. As expected, wide variations did occur in the numbers of students in the various ethnic groups. Because we sought to identify respondents' perceptions of social interactions which occur as one part of the education experience, we collected much of our data via easily comprehensible open-ended questions. As such wide number variations and the use of open-ended questions reduce the value of statistical analyses, we presented our research in the form of frequency distributions and cross-tabulations. Interviews with parents were tape-recorded and the complete conversations either typed by audio-typists in the case of English language interviews or translated verbatim in the case of foreign language interviews.

Our final methodological strategy involved the use of case studies developed from data that were gained independently from two separate sources (i.e. students and parents). The case studies were selected to represent the range of viewpoints identified via open-ended analyses of the whole sample. They enable the reader to experience first hand what the respondents in our survey are saying and thinking. Those analyses incorporating the whole sample give insights into the major trends and variations in the perceptions of the schooling experience, while the case studies provide valuable insights into individual viewpoints and perceptions.

SELECTED FINDINGS

To assist our interpretation of the findings, we developed a series of contrasting propositions which reported the extremes of a continuum, and we further postulated that the 'real' school lies somewhere between these two extremes in each case. Detailed descriptions of these propositions are outlined in Chapter 2. In this chapter we summarise the main themes by posing a series of questions and attempting to provide answers by drawing on our findings.

Schools, School Organisation and Curriculum - General

The main questions we discussed under the umbrella of schools, school organisation and curriculum are as follows:

- Does the school enable students to gain knowledge and develop those attitudes and skills which are a necessary prerequisite for continued self-education?
- Do school subjects prepare students for life or do they have a narrowly academic focus which is remote from practical real-life applications?
- Does the school facilitate the development of young people into mature, responsible, autonomous adults?

Most students agreed that they have achieved a greater knowledge through their school experiences. A number of students indicated that they had acquired a greater understanding of life, learnt how to get on with others and developed self-confidence through their schooling. They are particularly conscious of the instrumental function of schooling, i.e. they are aware that educational credentials are used to screen entry to jobs. Migrant parents of NES origin are one group who accept strongly the processes and content of schooling espoused by teachers and remote bureaucrats because they very much want to see their child succeed in Australian society.

The majority of students appear to enjoy, or at worst tolerate, their school subjects. However, they are not so accepting of the schooling processes. In this context students commented on: problems which arise from poor teacher-student relationships, poor teaching methods including the fact that insufficient attention is given to catering for individual student needs, unfair and overly restrictive school rules, pressures from examinations, heavy assignment loads, and assignments which are not co-ordinated across the various subject areas.

Students judged teachers largely on their personal and professional qualities. But the vast majority of students were unwilling to make generalisations about teachers - 'some are good some are not'.

On the negative side, some teachers were described as being over-authoritarian, inconsiderate, unkind, unfair, lazy and disinterested. Students were most critical of those teachers who did not show concern for them as individuals or who did not treat them with the same respect that they would show other adults. They were particularly annoyed by teachers who acted hypocritically (the 'do as I say not as I do' types). Our study has shown that some students are deeply alienated from schooling and in many of these cases we found poor student-teacher relationships to be a contributing factor. Parents also were critical of some teachers whom they described as apathetic about their job, and not strict enough.

On the positive side, a large number of students developed satisfying relationships with some of their teachers and described them as being understanding, fair, helpful, friendly and trustworthy. They praised those teachers whom they could talk to and those who would help in solving their problems - even problems not related to school work. There is no doubt that many students develop satisfying relationships with their teachers. Parents too were complimentary of teachers. Almost half the parents in our interview sample described teachers using such terms as good, helpful and competent.

Many students commented on the organisational aspects of schooling. They were critical of what they perceived to be overly harsh arbitrary school rules and methods of discipline. One student pointed out that too many rules can cause distrust between teachers and students. A number of students referred to school as being 'like a prison camp' and some became obsessed with breaking school rules, particularly those which are seen as excessively repressive, rather than learning. We found in our study that it was the high IQ student, whose critical faculties were most developed, who was the most unwilling to grant legitimacy to the existing school organisational set up. The fact that the higher IQ/higher socio-economic status (SES) students made proportionally more negative comments is of considerable interest. It is possible that the organisation of schools in terms of rules and regulations is more in tune with the culture of the children with lower SES backgrounds. Children are beginning to seriously question the legitimacy of externally enforced rules that they did not help to formulate.

The development of personal independence was a most important issue to young people in our study. Almost half the replies students gave in response to our question on teenage problems were addressed to this issue, which we divided into three dimensions: the problems of achieving emotional independence, selecting and preparing for an occupation, and maturing. Parents appear to recognise students' desires for independence to a much greater extent than school personnel. Parents in our interview sample (irrespective of social class) allowed their children more autonomy than they were permitted at school. Eighty per cent of parents interviewed said that, in making the final decision concerning their child's future education and job, the student's own opinion would be the most important consideration. A further 8 per cent felt that the decision should be made jointly by parents and child. In contrast, schools placed little emphasis on involving students in decision-making processes. Yet, paradoxically, when teachers expressed their views on teenagers' problems, they indicated correctly that the development of personal independence was of major concern to young people.

When we asked students who left school prior to the end of Grade 11 why they left, the major categories that emerged were: dissatisfaction with teachers, school in general (i.e. push factors); and to obtain work or training for work (i.e. pull factors). Some reported that they found schoolwork to be boring, unenjoyable and irrelevant to their chosen career. Others said that schoolwork was too hard for them and that they had experienced poor relationships with teachers. There were also some higher IQ students who left because there was no sense of challenge. Comparatively more of the higher IQ/higher SES school leavers reported dissatisfaction with teachers and school as a reason for leaving. On the other hand, almost half of school leavers left because of pull factors - to obtain work or training for work. Many of these students were seeking specific vocational education that was not provided within the school system.

So far we have presented the views of students and briefly touched upon the views of parents. Our analysis of teachers' responses to the question concerning 'three most difficult problems that secondary teachers today have to overcome' revealed that teachers made more comments concerning students than any other issue. Teachers commented on students' lack of self-discipline, apathy, lack of interest in and motivation towards school work, lack of respect and manners, lack of basic skills, negative attitudes to school, negative influence on each other, aggressiveness, poor behaviour and poor home life. (As our question to teachers was directed towards problems, we did not obtain any positive comments on students.)

In their response to the question on problems, teachers also commented on organisational factors. A number of teachers mentioned the Department, the system, or the hierarchy as problems. They used such terms as bureaucracy, red-tape, rigid, conservative, authoritarian hierarchy in their responses. They also drew attention to organisation problems at a school level. These included such aspects as: large classes, lack of space and resources and lack of time for teaching preparation.

We have already indicated that students were critical of the poor teaching methods used by some teachers. They drew particular attention to the fact that insufficient consideration is given to catering for individual student needs. Teachers also stressed that they did in fact experience difficulties in making information relevant to students' and society's needs.

There are no simple answers to the questions we posed to introduce this discussion. Students seemed to be more concerned with problems within the school system, e.g. problems of relationships with teachers, pressure of examinations, than with the content of schooling. When we consider both teachers' and students' comments, it is apparent that in many classrooms there appears to be an absence of a social, caring, trusting climate of mutual respect that provides the optimum conditions in which learning can and should take place. The overall picture that emerged falls short of the ideal, which should include high morale on the part of a committed teaching staff and motivated, eager students working in conditions of warmth, mutual trust and respect that nurture a sound learning climate.

Of course, many school students probably take the school system for granted. Most students saw the school experience as offering future rewards rather than present enjoyment and fulfilment. The higher IQ students were the ones who tended to be most perceptive of faults, anomalies and contradictions in the system, whereas the lower IQ students tended more to accept it. There is some indication also that the lower SES students were less critical of school rules and methods of discipline. Among those who were deeply alienated from school were a number of higher IQ students whose critical faculties were most developed. Perhaps our concern should be directed towards those students who cheerfully accept in an unquestioning manner what the school dishes out.

The relationship between attitudes to school, and attitudes and skills necessary for continued education is also complex. Some students who become alienated from secondary school may reject education per se. For others, negative attitudes to school may reflect a growing maturity, a development of critical faculties and a re-evaluation of what they want out of life.

When we asked students in Grade 9: 'In your opinion what would make school a better place to attend?' they asked for improvements in several areas which are fairly predictable from the preceding discussion. Students requested that lessons be improved. They called for more excursions, more social activities, more electives, more sport of various kinds, more break times and free periods, more individualised instruction, more student involvement and flexibility in lessons, and more lessons in sex, health and drug education. They asked for fewer homework assignments, less emphasis on examinations, shorter lessons, decreased compulsion regarding subjects and less waste of lesson time. Students would like teachers to be friendlier, fairer, more helpful and more understanding. They wanted teachers to be less authoritarian but they also wanted them to be able to control classes. Students commented on the need to relax school rules to allow students greater freedom, while others wanted rules tightened to control unruly elements. Specifically, students asked for relaxations in playground rules, less caning, less punishment of all because of some, and less detention. The issue of school uniforms was viewed by some students as an example of an externally imposed rule which students have no say in. A number of students asked that more interest be shown in students, for increased student participation in decision-making, for reduced schooling costs and for the introduction of a school allowance. The call for coeducation was a recurring theme in a large number of student responses.

Overall, students in our survey made a most impressive evaluation of the secondary school system in the areas of school organisation and curricula. The vast majority treated the survey seriously and tried to suggest ways to overcome the problems they had raised. The insightful comments made by the students in our survey may very well indicate that students are ready and able to play a much bigger part in school-decision making.

Schools, School Organisation and Curriculum - Career Education

- Does the school assist students to gain realistic perceptions of the world of work?
- Do students develop an understanding of their own occupational potential?

Students did not see the school as a major source of information on the world of work, but they were acutely aware that school credentials play a crucially important selection role both in relation to occupations and tertiary courses. When we questioned students in Grade 9, they rated highly 'parents', 'workers in desired jobs' and 'friends' as being very helpful sources of information; one-fifth of the students rated 'teachers' and one-tenth of students rated 'high school career advisers' in the very helpful category.

There was a noticeable shift in the proportions when we questioned the more select group of students who remained at school until Grade 11. One-third of this group rated 'teachers' and 'high school career advisers' in the very helpful category. Studies reported in the related literature indicated that school personnel over-emphasise the preparation of students for tertiary entrance and pay little attention to preparing students for school exit at different stages and in response to their different needs. Our present findings are in sympathy with these earlier conclusions.

Most students did not appear to be overly concerned about their lack of career education. In their responses to our question about teenage problems, a sizable proportion referred to the effects of increased unemployment but relatively few raised the problem of 'difficulties of selecting a job'. Students appeared to narrow their focus to the job at hand - succeeding at school in the tasks that are defined by the school. Parents, too, appeared to accept the status quo. Some may have felt uneasy that so little attention was given by the school to career education but they were powerless to bring about change. More importantly, they seemed to be more than willing to 'leave education to the experts'. It is seen as significant that the problem of providing career education for students was not raised by teachers at all in their responses to the question about the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers today have to overcome.

Students were, nevertheless, aware of their lack of occupational information. In response to a specific question, three-quarters of the students said that they needed either 'a fair amount' or 'a lot more' 'information' about jobs and courses open to them. These results are identical to those reported by the writer in an earlier study which followed up over 1000 HSC leavers (Meade, 1978). A number of students in our present study, but particularly those who left school before the HSC, would prefer lessons to be practical and more job-related.

In general, a higher proportion of migrant students with NES backgrounds said that they needed more information on jobs and courses in comparison with the ES background groups. A lower proportion of the NES background students reported that their parents were 'very helpful sources of information'. There is no doubt that their parents' English language problems contributed to this finding.

The fact that students end up making occupational choices based on little information is likely to contribute greatly to the problems they experience in job selection. If they are unprepared to select an occupation, they may choose further education courses that are unsuited to their desired destination. The present situation discriminates against those students who do not have informed assistance from family sources (e.g. NES migrant families).

There are several factors that would be likely to limit the usefulness of comprehensive occupational information if it was provided. Even if young people had full access to all relevant information on occupations, plus some experience of potential future work situations, there would still be those who would not be prepared to make an occupational choice, and many would make unwise choices. Some students would not be motivated to study information about occupations; others may frequently change their minds about which occupations they prefer.

A restricted labour market also limits the usefulness of comprehensive occupational information. Employers faced with large numbers of young people who qualify for jobs are in a more powerful position than previously when unemployment figures were lower. They have the potential to respond in ways that reduce the equality of opportunity of young people. For example, it becomes much easier for the employer who wishes to discriminate among applicants for job positions on the basis of such criteria as race and sex. Our investigation focuses on the school experience rather than post-school employment. However, Report No. 3 will show that a much higher proportion of school leavers in our study with NES backgrounds failed to gain employment in the months immediately after leaving school in comparison with ES background students. Alternatively, an employer may raise entry qualifications to an unrealistically high level and so discriminate against the early school leaver.

Can school personnel do more to teach students about the occupations and their own occupational potential? As we indicated in Chapter 2, there are many who are sceptical that teachers and school-based counsellors have enough appreciation of 'the way things are' in society to single-handedly do the job. It seems to this writer that steps need to be taken to break down the barriers that presently exclude and shield young people from the main institutions in society and that schools also need to break down those barriers that presently shield the school from community influences and resources.

Peer Relationships

- Does the school teach students to work co-operatively with others to solve problems?
- Are students encouraged to share resources and ideas with peers?

School provided the opportunity for students to engage in suitably rewarding experiences with their peers. For many students, the most rewarding feature of schooling was that it enabled them to meet people, make friends and help one another. But these processes occur mainly in non-academic areas and appear to take place in spite of school policies rather than because of them. In the formal school situation students commented on undue stress caused by homework and examination pressures. The pressures and tensions which result interrupted their leisure activities and interfered with the development of peer relationships. Students were well aware that they are ultimately in competition with their peers to gain entry to a limited number of jobs and that school credentials play a big part in job selection. Thus students were in an ambivalent position in that they were striving to develop satisfying social relationships with their peers while, at the same time, they were in serious competition with them in the areas of school performance and job selection.

Interactions among Students, Teachers and Parents - General

Several questions arise from our analyses of interactions among students, teachers and parents:

Are students, teachers and parents partners in the schooling process?

- Do students, teachers and parent groups find that their interests and identities are reflected in the content of school?
- Are schools responsive to local community needs?

Most parents in our survey believed that education is important for success in later life and were vitally concerned about their own child's success or otherwise at school. Comparatively, migrant parents of NES origin attached even greater importance to their child's schooling than parents from ES backgrounds. However, most parents in our survey were quite remote from the school and teachers. They exerted very little influence on the whole process of schooling and did not see involvement in education as their role.

It is true that a number of parents would have liked to learn more about the education system so that they were better able to communicate with school personnel about their own child's performance. But for most parents the extent of their interest in education was restricted to their own child's progress.

Parents presently have very little contact with teachers, and over half the parents interviewed said that they did not really know teachers well enough to comment fully or even comment at all about them. The vast majority of parents interviewed, did not attend the P and C meetings. In the few instances that parents and teachers did interact, the meetings were arranged to discuss either the child's school work or future or to discuss the child's conduct, e.g. truancy.

Parents in our survey gave several reasons why they did not wish to be involved in secondary education. Some felt that they did not have either the time or the opportunity to become involved because of other demands on them, including family and job responsibilities. Others believed that they did not have the necessary abilities to make a worthwhile contribution. In general, parents did not think that they were capable of making a contribution and thought that education was 'best left to teachers'.

Teachers raised several issues concerning school-community relations in response to our survey of teachers' problems. A number of teachers believed that there was parental and community apathy towards school while others believed there was a lack of community acceptance of school and even conflict between parents and school on such issues as values and expectations. When we asked teachers to give their views on teenagers' problems, we were interested to note that a few comments were directed towards the poor influence of some parents on teenagers. Teachers mentioned excessive parental control, excessive pampering, poor home standards and lack of parental interest as problems that some teenagers have to face. These isolated comments from teachers contrast with our perceptions, gained from the parent interviews, that the home environments of most students fostered personal autonomy.

Interactions among Students, Teachers and Parents with Particular Attention to NES Migrant Parents

We asked whether migrant parents of NES origin:

- Do not interact with school personnel or otherwise participate in the education institution?
- Give allegiance only to the culture of their country of origin?
- Are regarded and treated as inferior outsiders by school personnel and community members of school organisations?
- Display fresh and penetrating insights into the established culture (which includes schooling) because they take nothing for granted?

As we have previously indicated, all parents in the interview sample had attenuated relationships with school personnel but this was even more so in the case of the NES migrant group. Almost a quarter of the NES migrant group said that they did not know teachers well enough to make any comment at all about them. A number of NES parents referred to the language barrier as a major reason for their non-participation. NES parents tended to be most supportive of instrumental aspects of schooling and they encouraged their children to stay on at school. However, in comparison to ES parents, a greater proportion of parents with NES backgrounds expressed reservations that teachers were not strict enough or made comments which indicated that some aspects of the culture and values of school was of concern to them.

Our case study analyses unearthed some instances where NES parents have occasionally been the objects of prejudice both from teachers and other parent groups. On the other hand, proportionally more NES parents (50 per cent) made only positive comments in response to our question about teachers at their child's school. Comparative figures for the other parent groups were: both Australian (40 per cent); another or different ES country (35 per cent) and one parent ES other NES country (42 per cent). This result is in line with the favourable attitudes to education exhibited generally by NES parents and their children.

Out of the 348 NES migrant parents interviewed only 14 attended P and C meetings and we were surprised to find that 94 of the parents did not even know what the P and C was.

The main evidence we have on the 'liberating' experience of migration is the extraordinarily high aspiration/motivation and dedication to the duties of a student that many migrant students of NES origin displayed in spite of NES home backgrounds and other so-called 'deprivations'. Many NES migrant parents have clear goals for their children and schooling is seen as the key. In spite of some cultural reservations that the NES parents may have about aspects of the schooling process they appeared to be convinced that the system provides a pathway to better 'life chances' for their children. Yet there were few migrant parents who made contact with the school which was so central to many of their hopes and plans for their children.

To sum up, we can conclude that, along with most parents, only a small proportion of NES migrant parents interact with school personnel or otherwise participate formally in the education process. NES migrant parents expressed some concerns about elements of the education system which were out of tune with their own cultural background and expectations but these considerations were relegated well into second place in favour of giving support to education for its instrumental value to their children's futures.

IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE

Introduction

In this report we focused on interactions and interrelationships among students, teachers and parents. We were particularly interested in identifying each group's perception of the function of the school, and the educational practices through which this function can best be fulfilled. In Report No. 3 we will take up the question of the institutional ideology and the congruence or otherwise that exists between brightness, educational opportunity, aspirations/motivation and accreditation.

We have addressed a wide range of issues which arose out of our investigation into perceptions of schooling. A number of the problems we have identified are embedded in the cultural context of the wider Australian society and educational reform alone will be insufficient to dislodge such problems. A survey investigation such as the present inquiry is not designed to provide watertight solutions to problems. However, the findings can be utilised to provide 'pointers for change' and 'pointers for further research investigations'. Because the school is but one part of a complex social system which is interrelated via a complex array of social networks, it is difficult to initiate change in one aspect of the system without also initiating a reciprocating ripple of changes in other related aspects of the system. In other words, there can be no guarantee that a particular educational reform will in fact have the desired effect, i.e. it is quite impossible, given the present 'state of the art' (or is it science?) in the social sciences, to predict the final outcome of some innovation designed to improve aspects of any social system. In this section we highlight the main findings and draw out tentative implications for educational reform and further research.

We will defer discussing a number of issues raised in our theoretical analyses, e.g. equality of educational opportunity, until the analyses from Report No. 3 are available. In Report No. 3 we will present a comprehensive list of implications which arise from the complete study.

The Education Experience of Students - Curriculum Content

The content of schooling is largely taken for granted by students, teachers and parents. All are conscious of the importance of school credentials as a screening device for job selection. But in the scramble for credentials there is little attention paid to the overall rationale used to justify this procedure. We suspect that much of the content of schooling is included for traditional and historical reasons and, as such, is accepted as legitimate without too much close scrutiny. While some students appeared satisfied with the content of schooling, others claimed that school subjects were boring and irrelevant to their needs. For example, a substantial majority of students in our study believed that they need more career education.

We gave particular attention in our analyses to students who left school prior to the HSC. Almost half of these students left because of 'pull factors', i.e. they left to take up a further education course or a job or some combination of both. However, our study also shows that slightly more than half of the students left because of 'push factors', i.e. they were 'turned off' by schooling. Some of this latter group pointed out that school subjects were boring and irrelevant to their needs, some left because of poor teacher-student relationships, while others left because they could not cope with the academic demands of schooling.

Implications

- Teachers should identify and evaluate the overall rationale of schooling with a view to introducing school curricula which are relevant to the contemporary needs of all youth. If we make the assumption that the partnership model is valid, then teachers could be assisted in their deliberations by students and parents. However, our data revealed that most parents do not wish to contribute to discussions on the educational aims of secondary schooling but prefer to leave such deliberations 'to the experts'. Teachers who wish to obtain parents' views will need to entice them into discussions. Open debate on such issues may serve to raise the level of consciousness of persons involved in education and stimulate a healthy evaluation of what schools teach and do.

- In developing a rationale for secondary education, teachers ought to consider whether the present emphasis of schooling on narrow academic goals, which means that all students are presently denied important experiences in their transition to adulthood, is justified. Opportunities need to be made available for teachers to broaden their own horizons. Most teachers face a prospect not encountered by members of other occupations - they never leave school. When the school is a closed environment, their isolation represents a danger to the proper education of youth. Provision should be made for teachers to:

    - spend time working in non-teaching occupations;
    - engage in meaningful and substantial further education courses and experiences, both to keep up with the expansion of knowledge and to improve their ability to create favourable learning environments for all children.

- Our data generally point to the need for innovations in curriculum content. In developing and evaluating curriculum content educators need to:

    - provide satisfying and meaningful learning experiences for all students;
    - take account of the expressed desire of young people to develop those attitudes, skills and competencies that are necessary prerequisites to the development of social and personal independence;
    - provide an appropriate balance of academic and social development experiences to enable students to participate successfully in the various facets of society;
    - give emphasis to the application of studies to the solution of real-life problems;
    - integrate knowledge learned across separate subject areas;
    - provide appropriate career education experiences to enable students to gain realistic perceptions of the world

of work including their own occupational potential;

- provide counselling and guidance services to assist students to select educational paths and courses needed to achieve occupational goals and also to assist them to appreciate their own self-development interests and desires in relation to occupations;
- give students the opportunity to participate in work experience programs.

Teaching Process and Organisation of Schooling

Although we located evidence of teacher-student relationships that were satisfying, we also identified several major problems in this area. Both student and teacher groups appeared to be more concerned about aspects of interpersonal relationships associated with schooling processes than with the content of schooling. Students were critical of those teachers who did not treat them with the same respect they would show other adults. On the other hand, teachers were critical of students who had poor manners and displayed a lack of respect in their relationships with teachers. It is apparent that in many classrooms there is an absence of mutual trust and warmth in teacher-student relationships.

Students view teachers' excellence largely in terms of personal and professional qualities. We identified a number of students who were deeply alienated from schooling, and poor teacher-student relationships appeared to contribute to this situation in many instances. Our study has also demonstrated that there are many teachers in the schools who earn the respect and admiration of students. But our findings leave little doubt that a minority group of teachers exist who do not possess the personal resources, social skills, interest in children and general teaching expertise which are necessary prerequisites for quality education to occur.

The organisation of schooling exerts a major influence on interpersonal relationships. Teachers referred to problems of the department which they describe using such terms as bureaucracy, red tape, rigid, conservative, and authoritarian hierarchy. Similarly, students commented on rigid, inflexible school rules and organisations. In general, students experienced much more autonomy in their family life than they did at school. They sought more freedom in selecting school subjects and expressed a desire to participate in decision-making processes. Although both teacher and student groups are able to recognise that problems exist in areas such as interpersonal relations, it appears from our data that both groups feel that they are powerless to take any steps to solve these problems.

Students spoke positively about their interpersonal contacts with peers. They felt that school was a good place to make friends. On the other hand, students were conscious of the fact they were in competition with peers in the areas of school performance and jobs. A number of students said that they had experienced stress because of excessive homework demands and examination pressures. These demands on their time limited their social and leisure activities.

Implications

- The fact that students view teacher excellence mainly in terms of non-academic, personal and professional qualities has several implications:
  - Teachers should be encouraged and assisted to develop their personal and professional qualities to the fullest possible extent. As we indicated above, provision should be made for teachers to participate in appropriate in-service education experiences which give emphasis to improving interpersonal relationships.
  - Counselling and guidance services need to be made available to assist teachers who are experiencing problems with their teaching.
  - It appears from our data that a small minority of teachers are unsuited to teaching. Further research needs to be undertaken so that strategies can be developed to identify and assist such teachers. It goes without saying that secondary teachers have a crucially important influence on the educational growth and development of young people. Those teachers who are clearly unsuited to teaching and who fail to improve when remedial assistance is provided

should not continue to be employed as teachers.

- Research studies need to be undertaken to investigate methods of utilising non-academic, personal and professional qualities in the training and selection of prospective teachers.
- Teacher training institutions need to acknowledge the importance of teachers' non-academic, personal and professional qualities in their courses and methods of selection prior to and during training.

- Strategies and procedures need to be developed to enable teachers to be more involved in the school's decision-making processes and to reduce their feelings of powerlessness. It is apparent from our data that teachers are well aware of many of the problems raised by students. It appears that teachers believe that there are powerful forces opposing any innovation they may wish to introduce. As a result, many simply opt out of problem solving and accept the status quo.

- Strategies and procedures need to be developed to involve students more in the school's decision-making processes. Steps need to be taken to reduce the students' powerlessness in the school situation. In particular, students need more freedom to select courses of study which are most suited to their needs. It is not suggested that students should be given increased rights without an associated increase in responsibilities. Young people should be encouraged to accept partial responsibility for their own education.

- Increased opportunities should be provided for students to work with peers in group problem-solving experiences. The fact that students enjoy interacting and sharing experiences with peers needs to be reflected in teaching and learning strategies in academic as well as non-academic areas.

Interactions among Students, Teachers and Parents

The story of the Education System we have told does not begin to approach the 'partnership model' in which students, teachers and parents, as partners, possess a shared understanding of the functions of schooling. Parents in our study do not wish to become involved in secondary education. They do not make contribution to the definitions of schooling but allow their interests to be defined by others, i.e. they leave education 'to the experts'. They are no doubt influenced by the history of school community relationships in Australia wherein non-participation and non-partnership was the order of the day. But, quite apart from these considerations, many parents simply do not have the time to contribute because of their very considerable work and family commitments. However, parents would like to see an improvement in the communication links between home and school so that they can enter into two-way communications about their own child's education.

We found that many NES migrant parents were virtually cut off from any meaningful two-way communication with school personnel because of language difficulties. These NES parents in particular, lacked a shared understanding with school personnel of what is actually going on in schools.

Our investigation has shown that most students were capable of suggesting desirable innovations in school curricula and organisation. However, there are few available mechanisms which assist students to present views or influence what is taught.

Implications

- Our results indicated that the partnership model in education is unlikely to be successful if a key assumption of such a model is that parents will voluntarily assist teachers in areas such as curriculum planning. Parents in our study, in the main, preferred to keep out of formal education and leave teaching to the teachers. On the other hand, students appeared willing to discuss educational aims - student perceptions, however, are somewhat limited by their own school experience.

- A number of parents would like to see increased teacher-parent communication in two areas that relate to the education experience of their own child. They would like to communicate more with each teacher who teaches their child, to learn more about their child's progress. They would also like to share with teachers their insights and understandings of their own child in order to maximise their child's educational opportunities. Teachers who are striving to improve teacher-parent communications may find it worthwhile to improve communications in these two areas as a first step.

- We found that a high proportion of NES migrant parents could not communicate in English. In some cases our bilingual interviewers also found it difficult to communicate in the parents' first language. If school personnel wish to communicate more with migrant parents, they will need to gain access to bilingual services as a very first step.

- Teachers who wish to improve student-teacher interactions need to investigate present system constraints which inhibit such interactions.

A FINAL SUMMING UP

We have argued throughout this report that it makes a lot of difference whether students, teachers and parents go along with the content and processes of schooling as the result of a shared understanding of what is really happening at school. Our study reveals that members of each of these three groups recognised the instrumental importance of school. All were conscious that school credentials are used as a screen for job selection. However, there were many who choose not to look behind this visible outcome of schooling to the general appropriateness or otherwise of curriculum content and schooling procedures. These are largely taken for granted. Parents are, in the main, isolated and remote from schooling, and apart from the selection function of schooling, they are largely uninformed about the education experience. Teachers are striving to maintain the existing school system and to keep order. But some students and teachers are beginning to challenge many aspects of schooling in the areas of student-teacher relationships, school rules and the relevance of curriculum content.

Our data have shown the degree to which there is an absence of a shared understanding of the functions of schooling among students, teachers and parents. At the moment, each of these groups, in different degrees, finds its interests and identities defined by others. But we have also highlighted the contributions that students, teachers and parents wish to make to the education experience. We hope that these insights will assist educators to create an education system where the interests and identities of each of these groups are valued and given prominence.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE 1

COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE IN GRADE 9

Linguistic & Quantitative IQ(ML & MQ)	Socio-economic status	Parents' Country of Birth									
		Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Higher (107–135)	Higher (ANU status categories 1–8)	448	29	60	10	122	26	34	29	664	24
	Lower (ANU status categories 9–16)	467	30	142	24	148	32	31	26	788	29
Lower (70–106)	Higher	245	16	68	11	65	14	15	13	393	14
	Lower	396	25	328	55	133	28	38	33	895	33
Total Higher IQ		915	59	202	34	270	58	65	55	1,452	53
Total Lower IQ		641	41	396	66	198	42	53	45	1,288	47
	Total Higher SES	693	45	128	21	187	40	49	42	1,057	39
	Total Lower SES	863	55	470	79	281	60	69	58	1,683	61
GRAND TOTAL		1,556	100	598	100	468	100	118	100	2,740	100

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APPENDIX A

TABLE 2

COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE IN GRADE 10

Linguistic and quantitative IQ (ML & MQ)	Socio-economic status	Parents' Country of Birth									
		Both Australian		Both non-English-speaking countries		Another or different English-speaking countries		One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country		TOTAL	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Higher (107–135)	Higher (ANU status categories 1–8)	411	30	56	11	106	27	28	29	601	25
	Lower (ANU status categories 9–16)	429	32	134	26	130	33	28	29	721	30
Lower (70–106)	Higher	198	15	57	11	55	14	11	12	321	14
	Lower	317	23	275	53	109	27	28	29	729	31
Total Higher IQ		840	62	190	36	236	59	56	59	1,322	56
Total Lower IQ		515	38	332	64	164	41	39	41	1,050	44
	Total Higher SES	609	45	113	22	161	40	39	41	922	39
	Total Lower SES	746	55	409	78	239	60	56	59	1,450	61
GRAND TOTAL		1,355	100	522	100	400	100	95	100	2,372	100

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APPENDIX B

METHODOLOGY OF OPEN-ENDED ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

In an empirical study of coding error, Crittenden and Hill (1971) conclude that the levels of both intercoder reliability and coding validity for some items are unacceptably low. Scott (1955) states that 'ambiguity' and 'skill' factors of coders are legitimate components of the total measure of coding error. The problems of classification of research data are not new and several rules are well established: the system of classificatory categories should be exhaustive, mutually exclusive, and based on a single classificatory principle; the classification system should enable adaptation to both the structure of the situation and the respondent's frame of reference (Lazarfeld and Barton, 1955; Lazarfeld, et al., 1972; Sellitz, et al., 1967).

We adopted a coding strategy of the open-ended material designed to reduce coder error. Studies have shown that coder error is particularly troublesome when coders are asked to make judgments from attitudinal responses, which is precisely the nature of our material (Crittenden and Hill, 1971; Montgomery and Crittenden, 1977). We adopted a classification approach termed the 'numerically supported variety' by Lazarfeld et al. (1972:14). We began with an arbitrary list of fairly finely divided classifications. Coders were instructed to form a new response category if they were in doubt that a response was identical to a previously established response category. The coding frame was developed by the coder recording the actual words written by students. If an uncoded response was judged to be almost identical to an established response category, the actual words of the new student were again recorded. Up to fourteen different statements were coded for each student. Thus we built up a detailed list of comments from students. When a student's response was adequately described by former responses the comments were not recorded.

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An Illustration of the Method used in the Open-ended Coding

This illustration shows the method used to code the open-ended responses to the question, 'Is it a good idea for children of parents from non-

English-speaking countries to learn their parents' language?' (Meade, 1979) A similar method was employed to code the open-ended questions outlined in this volume.

The following response to the question as outlined above was given by George Lopez.

> Yes, I think its a good idea that the children whose parents are not Australian learn their parent's native tongue, because in homes of most immigrants they usually speak the idiom of their native country as English seems to be very difficult to learn at their age. Besides children would also be able to understand their parents cultural background by means of their foreign idiom. It may also be of some use if one day they decide to return to their native country, or to assist other people who speak the same idiom and have problems with English or even teach their language in Australia.

This was divided into four categories in the preliminary coding;

(a) Yes, I think its a good idea;

(b) Because in homes of most immigrants they usually speak the idiom of their native country;

(c) Because children will also be able to understand their cultural background by means of their foreign idiom;

(d) It may also be of some use if one day they decide to return to their native country.

There were approximately 500 of such preliminary categories. A frequency count of these categories showed which occurred most frequently (in rank order):

(a) Yes, because if the family decides to return to the home country the children can speak to the people there not being silent/ Yes, if the parents one day decide to return to their home country then the children would then know the language/ I think it is because if they ever go back to the parents country I think they should/ Yes, in case they want to go back/ Yes, because if the children go back to their parents country they can understand the language spoken/ I suppose so because if they ever want to go home they will be able to communicate with their family and friends/ If the child plans to return to his parents home country then it would be necessary for the child if he plans to live there/ (yes) if your parents decide to go back to the country they lived in before they came here to Australia/ Yes I suppose so if you ever wish to return to that country/ Also some day you might go back to your old country and you must know how to communicate.

(b) Yes, they can communicate in their parents home language/ Yes for better communication within family/ I think it is a good idea for the children to learn their parents language as then they can communicate with their parents/ Yes, because it would be more easy for them to communicate through each other.

(c) Yes, its a good idea/ Yes I think its a good idea/ I think it is a good idea for children to learn their parents language.

(d) No/No. Because that happen all the wogs and paddle faces will be speaking in a foreign language.

(e) No because they're now in Australia and English is our language so it should be spoken.

(f) I think it is a good idea for children to learn their parents language because then they can translate to their parents in their parents language and can fill in documents for their parents if their parents were unable/ Yes because you have to translate/ Yes because they can help translate for their parents if the parents have trouble with English.

(g) Yes.

(h) No it is not, you are in Australia now and should speak the language not a foreign language.

(i) Yes it is good as some parents do not understand English and therefore have to communicate with their kids in their own language/ Yes I do think that children of parents from non-English-speaking countries should learn their parent's language because the children could communicate to their parents more fluently/ Yes because they then can communicate with their parents and understand them better.

Next, we formed a smaller number of more systematic categories, guided by our numerical findings and the theoretical interests of the question (e.g. one of the theoretical interests was to locate indirect evidence which pointed to hostile and highly ethnocentric attitudes).

Categories (b) and (i) were collapsed into the one code as they were considered identical. Together with another category (not listed) which was concerned with communication with relatives and ethnic friends, categories (a) (b) and (i) were regarded as subsets of one major category, 'The ethnic language helps in communication'. Each of the three subsets were termed minor categories.

Categories (c) and (g) were considered identical, and so were combined as 'Yes' (unconditional). Categories (e) and (h) were also judged to be identical and were combined.

When collapsing the preliminary coding, those most frequently occurring categories were used as major categories. If a code did not fit any of these existing categories, a new major classification was created. If the coding seemed to report a slightly different aspect of an existing category, this was classed as a new minor category of the existing major category. For example, the category, 'They should speak only Australian', was similar to but less emphatic than 'Don't let them in if they can't speak English'. Another coding, 'Australians feel excluded by the ethnic language', was also thought to be a variation of the same theme.

APPENDIX C

PART 1

EXTRACT OF THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Questions Used in the Analysis of Parents' Perceptions of Schooling

Now, I want to ask you some questions about ......(S's) education.

E. 9 How is .... (S) getting on at school? (PROBE)

E.10 (a) Does .... (S) like school. (PROBE)
(b) How does he/she get along with the teachers? (PROBE)
(c) What do you think of teachers at the school? (PROBE)

E.11 Do you think .... (S) is capable of doing better than at present? (PROBE)

E.12 (a) Do you have any rules about .... (S's) homework? (PROBE: WHAT ARE THEY?)
(b) (IF YES) How were they arrived at?

E.13 Are you satisfied with the amount of homework .... (S) does?

E.14 (a) Is there anyone in the family who normally gives .... (S) help with homework?
(b) (IF YES) Who?

E.15 (a) Where in the house does .... (S) do homework?
(b) Does he/she have a desk of his/her own?
(c) Does he/she have a room of his/her own? (IF NO) Who does he/she share with?

E.16 Do you talk with .... (S) about school? Who initiates talk? (EXAMPLE)

M:
F:

E.17 How much does .... (S) rely on the stimulus or encouragement of other people in relation to his/her schoolwork? (PROBE: PARENTS, SIBLINGS, TEACHER, PEER, OTHER.)

The following set of questions are about .... (S's) high school.

E.18 (a) Have you been to .... (S's) school or had any other contacts with the school this year? (PROBE: WHO INITIATED? WHY? WHAT HAPPENED?)

(b) What do you think of the P and C ?

E.19 Are there any ways in which you, as parents, would like to be involved in secondary education? (PROBE)

E.20 (Apart from what you have just told me), since .... (S) first began secondary school, has the headmaster or any of the teachers ever contacted you to discuss his/her progress, courses or anything else? (RECORD ALL SUCH OCCASIONS.)

E.21 (Apart from what you have just told me), has .... (S) had any particular problems or difficulties at school? (PROBE)

Finally, I would like to ask each of you a couple of general questions.

B.33 Now, I would like to ask each of you two more general questions:

(i) These days, what is most important to young people for success in later life?

M:
F:

(ii) (IF NOT MENTIONED) Do you think there is a difference for boys and girls?

M:
F:

B.45 Finally, is there anything that you think is important in relation to .... (S's) future that I haven't asked you about?

M:
F:

APPENDIX C

PART 2

EXTRACT OF THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Questions Used in the Analysis of Parents' Perceptions of Schooling

Q. 9 PROBE. This is intended as a general question on S's school work. Does he work hard? Does he perform well? If not, what is parents' attitude? Whom do they blame, if anyone?

Q.11 PROBE. If S not capable of doing better than at present and if present performance not good, probe for the kinds of explanations parents hold re why not capable (e.g. explanations based on innate capacity, sex, being a migrant, having had a serious illness as a baby). Similarly, if S is capable of doing better, how do parents explain the discrepancy and whose responsibility is it (S, themselves, school, peers)?

Q.13 PROBE. What is parents' attitude to homework? How far do they see homework as a kind of touchstone for the adequacy of the educational system as a whole? What exactly are the good/bad outcomes of more/less homework?

Q.16 EXAMPLE. Try to get a short description of some particular recent occasion when one or both parents talked to S about school. Who initiated the talk? Who was present? What was it about?

Q.17 PROBE. This question is designed to find out to what extent parents see S as self-motivated and the kind of influence that specific other people have on him with regard to school achievement, how long he stays at school, and his educational aspirations.

Q.19 PROBE. This is a very open question. Follow up whatever answers the parents give by clarifying how they see the present or potential scope of their own involvement. What limitations do they see as desirable or appropriate on parental involvement in general?

Q.20 When? Who involved? What about? Outcome? Parents' attitudes?

Q.21 PROBE. Ask this question in a relaxed, low-key tone. Obtain specific examples if relevant; when, what about, who involved, outcome, parents' attitudes?

Q.22 PROBES. The experience of the trial interviews has led us to change the structure of this extremely important part of the interview. What the parent says in answer to an opening question often makes it unnecessary to ask the specific questions about qualifications, S's own attitudes etc. that were in the original schedule. In other words, an opening question about S's future occupation leads to answers that tell us everything we want to know in this area provided the interviewer probes intelligently. What is now suggested, therefore, is an opening question and four topics on which we require further information. The essential thing is that you should follow up these four topics where relevant, but should not push them where they don't apply. Please use all the skill you have to get the parents' attitudes, beliefs, expectations and hopes on the question of S's future education and occupation.

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